

Sam<sup>l</sup> THE Hill Q. 10.10  
**JEWISH SPY:**

BEING A  
PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL and  
CRITICAL *Correspondence*,  
By LETTERS

Which lately pass'd between certain  
*J E W S* in *Turkey, Italy, France, &c.*

Translated from the ORIGINALS into *French*,  
By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS;  
*And now done into English.*

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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VOL. IV.

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SAVED



The mode of  
Governing  
of the Island of Barbados

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A  
I have the honor to  
acknowledge the receipt  
of the volume of the  
History of the Island of  
Barbados, which you  
were good enough to  
send me. I am very  
sensible of the value  
of the work, and I  
trust it will be  
found to be a most  
valuable addition to  
the collection of  
the General Government  
of the Island of Barbados.

TO THE

UNDISGUISED and INIMITABLE

*SANCHO PANCA,*

True model of all worthy and  
faithful Esquires, Governor  
of the island of BARATARIA,  
&c. &c. &c.

LORD SANCHO :

**A**FTER having dedicated a volume  
of the *Lettres Juives* to your il-  
lustrious master, the hero of la Mancha,  
I should fail in my duty to you, if I did  
not offer you this. You deserve little less  
regard than the mighty Don Quixot ; and  
the character in which you appear, makes  
almost as conspicuous a figure in the work  
of your faithful historian, the ingenious  
Cervantes. Accept therefore of this small

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present ; and permit me, as a convincing proof of the esteem I have for you, to tell you a piece of news which must infallibly surprize you.

Not only your employment, but likewise your character, have been daringly usurped of late, so that you now find yourself a duplicate ; and as heretofore there were two Amphytrios and two Sofias, there are actually now two Don Quixots and two Sancho Pancas. - And indeed, in like manner as a certain ridiculous creature has taken it into his head to make use of the name, the profession, and titles of your illustrious master ; so another odd creature (altogether as comical) has pretended to be master of all your talents ; and to place himself, in quality of Esquire, near the person of this Don Quixot in literature. He is the hireling copyist, and the indefatigable compiler of his pretended discoveries : And you was not more assiduous in carrying the wallet, the bottle filled with Firebrace's balm and Mambrino's helmet, than he is in transcribing his master's rash, hasty researches, and putting them in their proper place. In fine, he resembles you perfectly, both in genius and person. Like you he is short, thick, and tun-bellied ; he has a dull, sullen air ; and his speech is as coarse as yours. His arch tricks, his lies, and

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and his misrepresentations are worthy of the sneers of the inns, and the stones of the yangees ; and may one day or other expose his posteriors to the just punishment of kickage.

Like you, he is vastly desirous of procuring some government. He had one in his eye in an island of the North ; and he flattered himself that he should go thither and pronounce decrees as sagacious as those you passed heretofore in the isle of Parataria : But his hopes were as short-lived as your government.

You see, Lord SANCHO, that it is impossible for a man to resemble you more. I therefore should be obliged to you, if, for your own sake and for that of many people, you would not permit your genius and person to be usurped in this manner. You make an excellent figure in a book : Your malicious simplicity, and your grotesque impertinences set people a laughing ; but, the instant you exist in skin and bones, in the republic of letters, you must necessarily be prejudicial to it, by dishonouring the name of a scholar, which suits you no more than it does your ass. Permit not therefore another person, by assuming your shape, to do the same injury to polite literature. Enter the lists against him ; and oblige him to give up a profession which no way suits him, and

# DEDICATION.

in which he ought to be looked upon as no better than an alien and an intruder.

Till I have the pleasure of seeing you combat with your original, do you continue to murder the Spanish tongue, and he the French; and believe me to be with very great sincerity and esteem,

**INIMITABLE SANCHO,**

**Your most humble and**

**most obedient, servant,**

**M. D.**



Dedication

Master **NICHOLAS**,

Barber to the illustrious Don  
Quixot de la Mancha.

Master **NICHOLAS**,

**I** Cannot express the pleasure I take in this opportunity to dedicate a volume of the *Lettres Juives* to you. You make so conspicuous a figure in the inimitable romance of Michael de Cervantes, that after having assured your illustrious friend Don Quixot and Sancho Panca, of my attachment and respect for them, I could not excuse myself from giving you the same testimonies of my esteem and friendship. I had so long waited for a fair opportunity of doing this, that I almost despaired of it when a certain quack doctor lately came (as good luck would have it) and offered me one; and I instantly observed so wonderful a resemblance between you, that it was a true pleasure to me to let you know it.

For your part, you was but a poor, awkward, country barber at best; and he was but one of those unhappy quacks, who, by their little packets of powder, and their vials of essence, are just able to keep life and soul together.

You afterwards raised yourself to the rank of a frater, though God knows, one that is ignorant enough: And he made himself one of those itinerant assassins, whom the angry fates permit to live as the scourges of mankind; and who, by the aid of some wretched certificates and patents, impose on the credulity of fools; and murder  
with

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with impunity most of those who are so stupid as to put themselves into their hands.

Your balsam of sir Firebrace used to make your friend Sancho puke most grievously ; and the medicines of your worthy imitator seldom fail to make most of the patients, whom he either forces, or who are so silly as to put themselves into his hands, to give up the ghost.

Weary of mowing the beards of clowns, and of applying plasters every now and then to their sores, you gave yourself up boldly to the noble fury of scouring the country ; and having courageously undertaken to judge of the grievances, and redress injuries, it proved so fatal to you, that you was fell'd to the ground in the very first onset : And your faithful imitator the mountebank, quite tired with killing people, or rather disgusted to find no more that would be dispatched after his manner, took it into his head to set up for an author ; but he was such a sinner, that he was as unsuccessful in that province as you in your knight-errantry. He is daily banged and buffeted ; so that, in all probability, the poor fellow will soon be like you in every respect. Weary to see himself kicked and cuffed about, he will quit the republic of letters, and mount the stage again : And if this does not answer, he will turn smell-feast ; sneak into some good kitchen, and there take up his quarters, where it will be as difficult, at least, to dislodge him, as it was formerly to get Sancho Panca out of the kitchen of the wealthy Gamache. I am,

Master NICHOLAS,

Your most humble, and  
most obedient servant,

M. D.

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# THE JEWISH SPY.

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## LETTER. CLV.

The excellency of the English laws; considered.—  
Observations on laws in general.—Some laws imposed by Lycurgus, king of Sparta, condemned as ridiculous and inhuman, tho' approved by Aristotle.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London—

**T**HE English, dear Isaac, are very nice observers of their laws, they follow the text strictly, without seeking explications which may elude them, or under pretence of entering into the idea of the legislator, converting the study of their laws into an arbitrary science. The courts wherein justice is distributed; are never in the least doubt, whether such a crime is to be punished in such a manner. It is the care of the judges only to discover whether the party accused be really guilty. This once decided, the law speaks the penalty of its transgression. In England the judge only reports the process; the law itself is, properly speaking, the judge.

One cannot, my friend, sufficiently approve a practice so prudent and so judicious. Whatever probity men may be endowed with, who are placed in the seats of justice, it is expedient to limit their decisions, and not to leave it in their breasts to punish or to leave unpunished, as they think fit, those who come before them. The heart of man is the seat of so many passions, and his understanding is so often the dupe of his prejudices, that it is next to an impossibility he should not err whenever he acts without restraint. If judges did not need direction, written laws had never been compiled; but all things had been left to the understandings of the judges. But it was justly apprehended, that judges might act like men, even in discharge of their offices, and see things through such mists of passion as might change their form and figure, or disguise them at least.

I am very sensible, my friend, that a rigid observance of laws may sometimes create mischiefs, for which there can be no remedies. I know too, that there are cases wherein it might be justly wished that we might interpret the will of the legislator, so as to give it a more or less extended sense. But I know too, that if such a liberty as this might be in some cases useful to private persons, it would not however fail to become dangerous, and even fatal to the publick. It would accustom the judges to arbitrary decisions, and open a gate to a thousand inconveniences, which would not fail to enter. But when a general rule is establish'd, we seek not the good of two or three persons, but of the far greater part of the society\*. Seneca, speaking of the Roman laws about insolvent debtors, which made no distinction between such as grew insolvent through inevitable accidents, and those, who by gaming and debauchery, drew their

\* Nulla Lex satis commoda moribus est: id modo queritur si majori parti & in summam prodest. Tit. Livius. Lib. XXXIV. cap. iii. num. 1.



punishments justly upon them; observes roundly, that it is better a few should run the risque of losing the benefit of a just excuse, rather than room be left for all the world to avoid paying, or suffering for non-payment by setting up specious pretences †.

It is sufficient, dear Isaac, to compel our approbation of this wise custom, to submit entirely and without reserve to the laws, that reason and experience shew this custom is more beneficial to the publick than that which leaves an arbitrary authority to the judges. For as nobody pretends to doubt, that men in general need some support to prevent their giving way to their passions; so, as judges are not angels, they want supports as well as other men: And this they may find by a steady adherence to the laws, which will alike prevent their hearts from being seduced, or their understandings imposed on.

From this necessity of yielding a precise obedience to the will of the legislators, there flows a need of having no laws in force, but what are strictly equitable and just. Whenever, through a change of times and circumstances, laws, which were once wise and salutary, become of another nature, there is a necessity of rescinding and making them void. There cannot be a more dangerous error for a state, or one more capable of disturbing the publick tranquillity, than the respect which some nations affect to pay to certain whimsical and ridiculous laws, and the memories of those who made them. One would imagine, that they were not men but Deities who instituted these per-

† *Quid tu tam impudentes judicas majores nostros fuisse, ut non intelligerent, iniquissimum esse eodem loco haberi eum qui pecuniam, quam a creditore acceperat, libidine aut alea absumpsit, & eum qui incendio, aut latrocinio, aut aliquo casu tristiore, aliena cum suis perdidit? Nullam excusationem receperunt, ut homines scirent fidem utique præstandam. Satius enim erat a paucis etiam justam excusationem non accipi, quam ab omnibus aliquam tentari.* Seneca de Beneficiis, lib. VII. cap. xvi.



petuated customs; and that being revealed to them, who yield to them, as the contents of our sacred scriptures were to us, they stood in awe of their indignation who gave them, in case they broke through them. Unhappy consequences of prejudices embraced in our infancy, whereby a whole society is sacrificed to an impertinence inserted in the written law, or ingrafted into a body of old customs!

We should have much less respect for legislators if we reflected that there is scarce one of them, even amongst the most knowing or illustrious, who has not introduced something extravagant or ridiculous, or contrary to the rules of strict morality and humanity at least. Lycurgus ordained, by the laws he gave to Sparta, that young woman should wrestle stark-naked before men, and that they should dance before them in the same manner, and sing certain songs. This legislator, in the institution of this extravagant custom, had in view the giving strength to the young women's bodies that they might bring forth strong healthy children, and feel less inconveniency in child-bearing. Such a method of rendering women robust was not to be practised, without bidding adieu to all sense of shame or decency; or must not a man have banish'd from his thoughts all the rules of good manners and of natural modesty, before he could think of introducing a custom so inevitably destructive of them? The Pagans themselves, in the midst of the impieties and darkness of their religion, could not avoid discovering how contrary this infamous law was to good manners. In the *Andromache* of Euripides, Pelus attributes the looseness of Helena entirely to her being educated at Sparta. "It is not in the power of Spartan ladies, says he, to be modest if they would; they come out of their parents houses with petticoats through which their limbs are visible. They run and wrestle with the young men; which I cannot suffer. After this, are you astonished that these women are debauched

debauched one and all\*?" This passage from a Greek poet, which so justly condemns that debauchery which Lycurgus had established on such false and ridiculous pretences, is an evident proof that probity and modesty have found advocates, even amongst nations whose established religions were impious, and but too favourable to the motions of the passions. "Virtue, says a Nazarene father, was respected, even where debauchery bore the sway†". May we not with reason stand amazed, that such as took upon them the care of mankind, and the prescribing to them laws, should nevertheless be more deficient, in respect to a sense of shame and good manners, than private men?

The errors of ancient lawgivers ought to serve as cautions to such as have, in these days, the power of altering or rescinding laws. They should be hindered, by considering of them, from having any prejudices in favour of such as have been enacted by their ancestors, so as to doubt of the expediency of repealing them, whenever they are found either useless or dangerous. Is it not ridiculous to have more respect, either for a man or for a custom, because the man has been dead, or the custom established five hundred years, than if the person was now living, or the custom just instituted? If we were once agreed on this principle, it would be easy to shew that such as are charged with the care of superintending the laws of several nations, would find enough to point out such as out to be abrogated, and to distinguish the good from the bad.

Lycurgus had established in Sparta a senate composed of twenty-eight persons, who balanced and kept within bounds the power of their monarchs. Aristotle censures the construction of this senate, be-

\* Euripides, *Androm.* ver. 598. p. 519.

† Tanta vis est probitatis & castitatis, ut omnis, vel pene omnis, ejus laude moveatur humana natura; nec usque adeo sit turpitudine viciosa, ut totum amittat sensum honestatis. August. de *Civ. Dei*, lib. II. cap. xxvi. p. 255.

cause the members were for life. "The mind, says he, grows old as well as the body; it is unjust to commit the lives and fortunes of our countrymen to such as may become incapable of preserving them".

Plato could by no means approve what Lycurgus had ordained, as to throwing into a certain pool at the foot of mount Tagetes such children as were born ill-shaped, tender, or with any kind of defect.

Aristotle, on the contrary, praises this unnatural cruelty, which ought rather to be exercised by wild beasts than by men. As to children, who should be bred up or exposed, that philosopher says, the law ought to provide against the bringing up of such as are imperfect, or any ways maimed in their limbs: And that in such places as the laws of the country would not permit of this, another expedient, which he mentions, should be practised.

After reading a proposition so absurd, so cruel, and so apparently repugnant to humanity; ought we blindly to adopt laws made by men, who are held ever so much superior to the rest of their species, on account of the strength of their understandings? Happy, my friend, is the nation where the laws are inviolably adhered to; and where, at the same time, none are received but what are founded in virtue, prudence, and probity! That which, in too many countries, gives the judges room to raise themselves above the laws, to attribute to themselves a kind of despotic authority, and in criminal matters especially, to erect a kind of arbitrary jurisdiction, is the visible flaw in the written laws of those nations. As they have it not in their powers either to alter or abrogate those laws, they take this method of explaining them to their fancy, and this, after a hundred different methods according as they apprehend a variety of cases may require. In all these different explanations, they very often mistake the motions of their passions for impressions of justice; and if at any  
time

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time they save thereby some innocent persons, it is probable they free as many who are guilty.

I return, dear Isaac, to the manner in which the English administer justice. It is wise, prudent, and worthy the imitation of all other nations. Whenever they perceive a law to be wanting, they enact it; and take care to execute it strictly, till they see cause to abrogate it. If, in process of time, they perceive it to be hurtful, they do not endeavour to elude it by explications, but repeal it. From an apprehension of introducing this pernicious custom, of leaving judges at liberty to follow their caprices in matters of life, or even of the properties of their fellow citizens, instead of granting an unlimited authority to magistrates, the English allow their kings to be only protectors of the laws, and not tyrants.

Adieu, dear Isaac, live content and happy; and may the God of our fathers cover thee with blessings.

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## L E T T E R CLVI.

The errors and prejudices introduced among the European nations in matters of religion, considered.

—Many of the fathers endeavour to establish as points of morality what was only the effects of prejudice, passion or caprice in their own minds.

—Grotius and Puffendorf commended preferably to many divines,

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London——

**T**HE strange humours, dear Isaac, which I have observ'd in the nations through which I have rambled; those errors and prejudices which, generally speaking, blind mankind, have obliged me to reflect seriously on the bad state of morality among the Europeans. They are thoroughly persuaded that  
the



the maxims they follow are more conformable to reason, and the nature of things, than are those of the Africans and Asiatics. However, when we nicely examine their sentiments, especially such as are founded on the authority of their divines, we easily discover that they are as wide of justice and equity as those of the Cannibals, or any other savages.

We need not be astonish'd that people do not perceive errors in which they are grown up, and of which they grow every day more and more persuaded. They cover them with a veil of religion and piety; and thus they render them venerable. They believe that they serve God in digressing from the rules of morality. How then should we wonder at such digressions?

The first Nazarene doctors, whom they commonly call the apostles, preach'd a doctrine so conformable to equity, and of such high use to society, that their greatest adversaries acknowledge their moral precepts to be infinitely superior to those of the wisest philosophers among the ancients. Our Rabbi's themselves readily admit, that if the Nazarenes followed exactly the fundamental principles of their system of morals, they would be obliged to esteem them as men every way more worthy of praise than Socrates himself. But unfortunately for them, and still more so for us, they have entirely abandon'd the sentiments of their first doctors; and their morality at this day, is a kind of political patchwork, wherein they have endeavour'd to preserve some outward resemblance of their true and ancient system.

It seems to me, dear Isaac, that men are born to be the dupes of all such as pretend to instruct them for their own good, and yet really intend to serve their private interests thereby: Two hundred years after these first Nazarene doctors had open'd the eyes of their disciples, and taught them the rules of exact equity, a set of divines sprung up, who made it their business to destroy what the others had built up\*.

\* See the second part of the Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters, in which our author treats amply of the fathers of the church.



Among these there was one Origen, a man of a dark and gloomy temper, who was for pushing things to extremity. His humour carried him so far as to make him the first victim of the whimsicalness of his own ideas. For in a strong fit of enthusiasm, he castrated himself, that he might be able to instruct women in the principles of religion, without running any risque of yielding to temptation.

Tertullian departed still farther from the rules of true morality. He publish'd and maintain'd opinions which absolutely overturn'd all rule and order in states: He pretended that a Nazarene could not in conscience execute the office of a judge, damning all magistrates without restriction, and insinuating that to be an emperor, and remain a christian, was impracticable.

These first errors, so contrary to sound morality, were quickly increased by new ones, invented and published by other doctors; each age produced an author, who sapped some essential point of that equitable system which the first Nazarene doctors had established: For tho' these writers were men of genius, learning and merit, they nevertheless gave way to the impetuous motions of their respective tempers, and became the first dupes of their own passions. In the time when the Arians had the emperors on their side, Gregory Nazianzen declaimed against all persecutions; he preached warmly for toleration, and maintain'd, that only gentle methods were to be made use of to persuade the minds of men. But when on the death of an emperor, his successor proved no favourer of Arianism, the same Gregory wrote a letter to Nectarius, exhorting him to represent to the emperor, that piety and religion demanded he should not permit the hereticks to assemble, or shew any kind of regard to the privileges which had been granted them. So far was this Nazarene doctor from preaching a morality as pure as that of the first founders of this religion, that his doctrines fell infinitely below those of the pagan philosophers, who all acknowledged,

knowned, that that fidelity, which consists in sincerity, and in maintaing one's word, is the foundation of all justice\*.

This Gregory was not the only one amongst those which the Nazarenes called the Fathers, who supported errors directly contrary to right reason, and dangerous to publick tranquillity. Austin, a man truly illustrious, and of a sublime and quick wit, but vain, hasty, and of an extravagant temper, wrote at first with moderation and prudence against the Donatists, who were his adversaries; but at last, the warmth of his genius carried him away. From that moment the philosopher vanished, and the controversial divine appeared in his true light. He then began to maintain, loudly and openly, that it was necessary to persecute, destroy, and exterminate such as are called hereticks; and for this doctrine he justly deserves the title of the patriarch of persecutors. He even dared to advance, that we are not bound to keep faith with hereticks, because all things belong to the faithful by divine right; and there is nothing unto which hereticks can have any legal title. In this manner, this red-hot African establish'd it as a thing certain, that contracts made by Nazarenes with men of other religions, were to continue in force till such time only as they had the power of violating them. How much more pure is the morality of Cicero? Fraud, says the Roman philosopher, aggravates, instead of excusing perjury\*.

It was not only in their religious disputes, that the fathers, or Nazarene divines, subverted moral principles. They sometimes abused certain passages taken from our sacred scriptures, in order to authorize their own erroneous opinions. Ambrose, in explaining the psalm, wherein David says that he had of-

\* *Fundamentum est autem Justitiæ Fides; id est Dictorum Conventorumque Constantia & Veritas. Cicero de Officiis. Libr. I. Cap. VII.*

† *Fraus enim adstringit, non dissolvit, Perjurium. Cicero de Officiis, Libr. III. xxxii.*

fended against God alone \*, takes occasion from thence to set up a principle the most absurd, and the most contrary to humanity. He says expressly, that "David did not sin against Uriah, when he caused him to be put in the fore-front of the battle, that he might fall; because kings, being masters of the lives and goods of their subjects, may take them away when they think fit, without being guilty of any wrong, in respect to men, on account of these acts of cruelty and caprice †." Make this principle agree, if you can, with the fierce and imperious behaviour of this very doctor towards the emperor of Theodosius, which the Nazarenes have however extolled beyond measure, or with those outrageous injuries, with which, without difficulty, he loaded Magnentius. This was far enough from corresponding with that excessive power, which, in the before-cited passage, he so liberally bestows on kings. Can there be any thing more frightful, extravagant, or worthy of punishment, than to assert, that a prince, who takes away the wife of one of his subjects? and causes afterwards the innocent husband to be put to death, sins only against God, and does no real injustice towards him who is the martyr of his cruelty? To be sensible of the pernicious consequences of an opinion like this, one needs only reflect on the frightful disorders which it must necessarily draw after it. "There is, says the sage La Bruyere ‡, a certain commerce, or exchange of duties between sovereigns and subjects; which are the most difficult to perform, I determine not: This would be to judge, on the one side, of the strict obligations to respect, duty, fide-

\* Tibi soli peccavi, & malum coram te feci; &c. Psalm. L. vers. 6.

† Rex utique erat, nullis legibus tenebatur, quia liberi sunt reges a vinculis delictorum. Neque enim ullis ad pœnam vocantur legibus, tuti imperii potestate. Homini ergo non peccavit, cui non tenebatur obnoxius. Sed quamvis tutus imperio, devotione tamen ac fide erat Deo subditus. Ambrosii Apologia Davidis, Cap. X.

‡ Caracteres on Mœurs du Siecle, Tom. I. pag. 479.

lity, obedience and dependence; and on the other, the indispensable obligation of doing justice, and acting beneficently, which belong to the prince. To add to this, that he is absolute master of the goods of his subjects, without regard, without account; I say, to add this, is running into the notions of a favourite, who would add any thing."

Behold, my friend, a morality quite different from that of Ambrose, which is so much the more surprising, because this slavish submission was never insisted upon among the Pagans, the most devoted to despotic government. So far were they from believing, that kings were at liberty to possess themselves of the goods of their subjects unjustly, and to take away their lives at their will, that Herodotus\* informs us, the Persians, who were so submissive to their princes, had amongst them a law, by which their kings were forbid to put a man to death for a single crime. By the same law, great lords were forbid to treat their slaves rigorously for the first fault. They were directed to consider, whether the mischiefs they had done were greater than the services they had render'd them; and in case they were, then it was allowed them to punish the criminals as they thought fit.

What difference, dear Isaac, between these wise and prudent laws, and the opinion of certain Nazarene doctors? Is it not in truth amazing, that people, enlightned only by the weak rays of reason, and remaining as yet under the dark cloud of paganism, should have ideas, notwithstanding, of a morality much more wise and equitable, than that taught by the wise men and priests among those who acknowledge the spirituality and unity of the Deity?

Some amongst these seem to be ignorant of the laws even of good manners, and at the same time incapable of being restrained by the most sacred ties of society. They have violated the duties of friendship; their passions and their prejudices have so blinded them, that they have thought it excusable

\* Herodot. Libr. I. pag. 67.



to accuse and blacken, by the basest calumnies, those with whom they have lived on the best terms, and with whom they had no other dispute than what was occasioned by some slight difference as to certain points of doctrine. Jerome, a man of a bold genius, one who wrote a vehement stile, which, it must be owned, in purity, comes little short of that of Cicero, falls without mercy on his old friend Ruffinus, because he had embraced the opinions of Origen. The good terms they had lived in, and the intimate friendship which had subsisted betwixt them for many years, could not allay his fury; he was forced to give way to his choler, and let it empty itself in a libel. Happy had it been for him, if he could have made use of the wise lessons which a heathen writer hath given the world on this subject. I mean, if he had practised the sage maxims delivered by Cicero in his tract *De Amicitia*; he would then, without doubt, instead of decrying Ruffinus, endeavour to convince him by fair means, and by using the most gentle methods.

True tenderness hath no taste of pleasure, satisfaction, or of glory, if those in whom it has an interest, take no part in them\*. This delicate sentiment has been long out of the heads of divines, and controversial writers. There is nothing they do not sacrifice to their passions, and the moment any one of their friends ceases to be of their opinion, their regard for him ceases also. Their friendship is turned into hate, and they offend alike against the laws of equity and the rules of decency. They would, if it depended upon them, exterminate, by fire and sword, all such as are guilty of the unpardonable crime of being no longer their slaves†.

Vol. IV.

C

Unhappy

\* *Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate frui,  
Decrevi tantisper, dum ille abest meus  
Particeps.* Terent. Heaut. Act I. Scene II.

† The Ecclesiastics have in all ages found out fine titles to  
old their cruel persecutions against their enemies, or rather  
against those they did not like. I shall bury in silence, says  
a bishop



Unhappy effects of the weakness of those principles, which make up that false and pernicious morality that covers with an appearance of virtue those errors which are most contrary to the publick good, and most destructive of the peace of civil society.

If a true and wholesome morality be known amongst the Nazarenes, they are indebted for it wholly to laymen. Grotius and Puffendorf have done more good to mankind by their writings, than all the divines antient and modern. These sage lawyers have gone up to the fountain; they have examined with care the motives furnished by the law of nature. They have supported these by the authorities of the first Nazarene legislators, whom I have before recommended, in correcting the abuses, and destroying the errors which had been introduced by those men who were desirous of establishing as points of morality, whatever was dictated to them by their caprice, their hatred and their ambition; they have shewn their readers the naked truth, which others had made it their business to conceal. However, notwithstanding the efforts they have made to become useful to all the world, they have hitherto been able to do but a part of the good they proposed. Too many divines, zealous in supporting their own errors, and those of their predecessors, have done all they could; and are yet using their utmost endeavours to discredit all works, which teach a pure, simple and humane morality, and which disapprove of all the violences they would consecrate under the specious pretext of religion. "When the admirable treatise

" a bishop of the fifth century, who was persecuted for Nestorianism, the chains, confiscations, marks of infamy, massacres worthy of compassion, and of which the enormity is such, that those who were eye-witnesses of these slaughters, scarce believe what they saw. All these tragedies were acted by bishops; amongst them effrontery passes for a mark of courage, they call their cruelty, zeal, and their fraud is honoured with the name of wisdom." *Etherius Tyrannorum Episcopus; inter Opera Theodoret.* Tom. V. pag. 688 & 689.

of the rights of war and of peace, says Puffendorf\*, first appeared, the ecclesiasticks, instead of thanking the author, rose up against him, one and all, and not only procured it to be put into the Index Expurgatorius, by the popish inquisition, at which one needs not be surprized, but also excited several protestant divines to write against, and to do their utmost to decry it. The same practices were repeated on the publishing the Law of Nature and of Nations; the Jesuits at Vienna procured its prohibition."

Believe me, dear Isaac, that this outrageous aversion of the divines towards all such as have attempted to support the laws of humanity, and to make known its duties to their fellow citizens, is the strongest obstacle to sound morality; insomuch that one may safely say, that there is more benefit to be received by reading the books left us by Pagan philosophers, than those of certain doctors, who pass notwithstanding for the great oracles of mankind. Hapless are those nations, who are unacquainted with any other moral system, than such an one as is to be picked up out of books approved by the Spanish, Portugueze, and Italian inquisitors!

Farewel, dear Isaac, and address thy prayers to the supreme Being, that he would be pleased to open the eyes of all mankind; for though we are Jews, we ought notwithstanding to wish that the Nazarenes knew and practised a more equitable morality. If the Spaniards and Portugueze would become disciples of Grotius and Puffendorf, they would not slaughter our brethren in the iniquitous manner they do. May the God of our fathers heap blessings upon thee.

\* *Traite du Droit des gens*, Preface de Barbeyrac, page 22.

## LETTER CLVII.

Onis makes a trip to Jerusalem; describes the emotions of his mind on seeing that ancient and holy city.—The Turks have built a mosque on the foundation of Solomon's temple,—Onis endeavours to find out the reason why the Jews have been so harrassed and persecuted by all other nations.

ISAAC ONIS, to AARON MONCECA.

Cairo.——

**Y**OU are, without question, surprized, my dear Monceca, at my silence, and accuse me, I dare say, of laziness and negligence; but you will change your opinion, when I tell you, that I have lately made a voyage to Jerusalem. The nearness of the holy city of David, the desire I had of seeing that illustrious capital of the kingdom of our ancestors, the facility of satisfying my curiosity, engaged me to lay hold of the opportunity which offered, of making a trip in a vessel bound from Alexandria to St. John d'Acre.

It is impossible for me to express to you, my dear Monceca, the agitations of mind I felt in passing through Palestine. Joy, grief, pity, anger, respect, spight; each of these passions succeeded the other in my heart, and sometimes rose there all at once. "Happy place! cried I, where the God of Israel was served heretofore with such splendor as his worship deserved; have my eyes the pleasure of beholding thee? But alas! in what state are thy cities and palaces, of which thou wert formerly full? I see nothing but ruins, melancholy remains, which have escaped the cruelty, the rage and fury of our enemies. Just and good God, to whom alone belongeth vengeance, remember thy people!"

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At these words, my dear Monceca, my eyes were filled with tears; and though I disapprove the revengeful temper of my brethren, yet a holy fury at that time seized me, and got the better of all my philosophical reflections. I prostrated myself upon the ground, and turning myself towards the ruins of the temple, from which I was not distant above fifteen leagues; I there poured forth the prayer which our brethren use many times in the year in their synagogues.

“Look down, O lord! look down on the evils which our enemies do unto us. Remember thou the cruelties of Nebuchadonasar, and those of Titus; and above all, O lord, remember Adrian, the most cruel of all the destroyers of our nation, who erected shameful statues on thy altar, and defiled thy holy city with idolatry: Who razed and utterly destroyed nine hundred and fourscore towns, and burnt four hundred and fourscore synagogues\*.” My grief grew still stronger, when I came to Jerusalem, and I felt my heart pierced with a thousand wounds, when I looked upon the ruins of the temple. The Turks have built a mosque upon its outward court, which is still paved with black and white marble. In the middle, and where heretofore was the holy of holies, there is a Mohammedan temple, covered with a grand dome, supported with two rows of columns of marble. In the midst of this dome there is a large stone, from which the Turks assure us Mohammed went up into Heaven.

Judge, my dear Monceca, of the despair of a true Israelite, at the sight of this infamous edifice,

\* There is in the Jewish Ritual a hymn for the ninth day of the month Ab, in which we read these words. Recordare, Domine, qualis fuerit Adrianus, crudelitatis consilia amplexus, consuluit Idola se pervertentia, & sustulit combussitque quadringinta & octoginta Synagogas. Tractatus Talmudicus, Giffin dictus, apud Joan. a Lent, de Judæorum Pseudo-Messias, pag. 18.



raised on the foundation of Solomon's temple. The grief, which I was unable to shake off, would not allow me to remain long at Jerusalem. Satisfied therefore with kissing the holy earth, which our posterity shall one day purify from all the impieties, and all the abominations which our enemies have committed there, I returned to Cairo, carrying with me a box full of the precious earth on which the temple was built. I did this not in imitation of the superstition of the Nazarenes, who, because they have an infinite respect for certain places at Jerusalem, believe that there is something more in that earth than in any other; but because I was glad to have it by me as an efficacious memorial of the evils our crimes have brought upon our country, and that I might thereby be excited to be once more virtuous.

When I consider, dear Monceca, the mischiefs our fathers have suffered, I am inclined to believe that they were guilty of some prodigious crimes, the knowledge of which hath not reached us. Nay, I must own to you freely, that were I not most firmly persuaded of the truth of our religion, I should, on examining the ills we have suffered since the sects of the Nazarenes commenced, be led to believe the prophecies were accomplished, and that the God of Israel having abandoned us his people, had made choice of some other.

Without staying to consider the first destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, I run over in my mind, with astonishment and horror, those evils with which the Jews were overwhelmed by Adrian. After that cruel emperor had slain Barcokebas, and taken the city of Bitter, the last resource of Israel, he ordered the image of a hog, cut in marble, to be placed on that gate of Jerusalem which looks towards Bethlehem. He caused a theatre, and various temples to false gods, to be erected with stones collected out of the ruins of the temple of Solomon, and set up the statue of Jupiter in the place of the holy sanctuary. He forbid the Jews, on pain of death,

to enter Jerusalem, and cut off the ears of a multitude, whom he caused to be transported into several countries.

If the miseries we daily suffer in Spain and Portugal, did not shew us too clearly how far the malice of men may extend, one could not give credit to the cruelties which our authors assure us were exercised on our nation by Adrian and his soldiers. They say, "that after the taking of Bitter, the slaughter was so great, and rivulets of blood ran with such force, that they carried before them stones of four pounds weight, and discoloured the sea at a considerable distance." They tell us farther, "that when the Romans had possessed themselves of this city, they drove all the scholars into one place, and there burnt them, with their books; because at the beginning of the siege these youths had made use of their pen-knives and steel-pencils, to kill their enemies." Thus they made it a capital crime for persons to defend themselves when they were attacked. The loss of Bitter was attended with the entire dispersion of our nation. The ills we endured under Titus were but slight things, compared to what we suffered under Adrian. He caused numbers of Jews to be sold at fairs, at the same price with horses; and sent multitudes into Egypt, where they perished with hunger, thirst and fatigue. Is it possible, dear Monceca, that God should expose a people to such mischiefs, if their crimes had not merited so rude a chastisement? I cannot think but I am in the right to say, that our authors have hid from us the true causes why the Almighty thus abandoned his people to the rage of their enemies. Surely the Jews had committed some great crimes against the Romans, with which the Deity was justly offended. Under colour of religion perhaps they had committed murders, and defiled themselves with the blood of innocents. We shall see some cause to credit these suspicions, if we give credit to the writings of a Nazarene father, who lived within two ages after Adrian. By him we are informed, that the famous

famous Barcokebas, the author of the war made by the Jews against the Romans, was a celebrated impostor, who plunged our nation into an abyss of misery, out of which it has not delivered itself to this day. This wretch, who called himself the Messiah, made use of a trick to breathe fire and smoke\*, which is now common to our jugglers. By this means he excited the Jews to revolt, and by an excess of fanaticism, scarce to be distinguished from madness, he obliged all the Jews who came to serve his army, which became at length to be two hundred thousand strong, to cut off a finger, as an instance of their courage. This monster, born for the destruction of his brethren, seduced almost the whole nation. They enter'd into his views, shook off for a time the Roman yoke, and, in extenuation of their revolt, and of these murders, set up the most frivolous pretext that ever was heard of. To this our authors agree, and, by the reasons they offer in defence of the Jews taking arms, justify all the cruelties of the Romans.

If we believe what is told us in the Talmud, the war against Adrian was occasioned by the putting several Romans to death most cruelly and unjustly. Therein we are told†, that it was a custom among the Jews, for a man to plant a cedar when a son was born unto him, and a pine at the birth of a daughter; they made use of the timber of these trees for making the nuptial bed, when those chil-

\* Ut ille Barcokebas, Auctor Seditionis Judaicæ, Stipulam in ore succensam. Anhelitu ventilabat, ut flammam evomere videretur. Hieronymi Apologia II. adversus Rufinum.

† In more fuit ut cum nasceretur infans plantarent cedrum, cum infantula pinum: Cumque nati contraherent matrimonium, ex iis conficerent Thalamum. Die quadam transiit filia Cæsaris, & contractum est ei crus carpenti Cedrum istiusmodi exciderunt, atque eam attulerunt. Insurrexerunt in eos Judæi, atque eos ceciderunt. Relatum est Cæsari rebellare Judæos. Profectus ille in eos iracundus excidit totum cornu Israelis. Tractatus Talmudico-Babyl. Giffin dictus, folio 57. apud Joh. a Lent de Judæorum Pseudo-Messias. pag. 7.

dren came to established in the world at whose birth they were planted : The daughter of the emperor Adrian passing through Judea, the vehicle in which she was carried, broke down, and the Romans not knowing the use to which those trees were destined, cut down one of them to repair the princess's carriage ; hereupon the Jews rose in an instant, and murdered all her train, for daring to destroy a tree they held sacred.

There can be nothing more ridiculous, or more false than this story, since nothing is more certain than that the emperor Adrian never had a daughter. But admitting the story to be true, did not our ancestors deserve to be severely punished, for revolting on so slight an occasion? Was it not a frightful act of barbarity to slaughter the guards of a princess, for a thing of which they knew not the consequences?

Without having recourse to the chimerical notions of the Talmud, let us, Monceca, freely own, that the impostor Barcokebas prevailing on the mutinous disposition of our ancestors, drew upon them those ills, by which they were crushed. Instead of thinking of the mischiefs which fell upon them in the days of Titus, and which ought to have served 'em for warnings, they irritated the Romans by their disobedience ; and, by their cruelties and murders, offended God, in whom alone they ought to have put their trust. It ought therefore to be fairly owned, that as never any people in the world suffered as we have done ; so did there never exist any whose cruelty, pride, and obstinacy, did so much merit to be abandoned by God. And which is still worse for us, most of the crimes of our nation have been committed through the instigation of such as have pretended to defend religion by committing them.

We ought to have our past misfortunes everlastingly before our eyes, in order to hinder our becoming dupes to some new impostor. Whenever  
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the Messiah shall come to put an end to our slavery, and to break our chains in pieces, he will not need to direct us to dip our hands in blood. His power alone will subdue the proudest hearts, and his will must suffice to do whatsoever he desires: To him nothing will be impossible; false prophets and impostors only found their doctrine in the destruction of a part of mankind. Is it not madness and folly to maintain, that God will send us a deliverer, who shall authorize us to commit all sorts of cruelties? Those who form such an idea of the Messiah, make little difference between him and a Spanish inquisitor. Let us, Monceca, reject these idle notions, and let us be assured, that our deliverer, instead of lighting up new disturbances in the world, will spread peace and tranquillity over all the earth.

Farewell, dear Monceca, form no hopes but what are wise and worthy of the saviour whom we expect.

## LETTER CLVIII.

The absurdities advanced by many Jewish writers exposed; especially, of one who wrote a book intitled, *Historia Jeschux Nazareni*, &c. which contains a number of ridiculous, pitiful falsehoods, touching Jesus of Nazareth.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS.

London—

**T**HE Nazarenes, dear Isaac, seem to have reason for those reproaches with which they load most of our authors. They accuse them of having invented a thousand odious stories injurious to their legislator, and to have falsified ancient history with equal ignorance and malice. It is impossible for us to deny, that the Jewish writers have given their  
adversaries

adversaries just reason to make these complaints. For without speaking of the gross fables which are inserted in the Talmud, on purpose to hurt the memory of Jesus of Nazareth, whose system of morality is so pure, that no Israelite philosopher can forbear admiring it; what writings, big with calumny, have not the Rabbins scatter'd abroad ever since the first appearance of this sect? I do not know, my friend, whether a certain book has fallen into your hands, the author of which lived about four or five hundred years ago, but who has disguised himself as well as he could, with intent to make his work appear as if written shortly after the death of the legislator of the Nazarenes. This fraud, however, is easily discovered, and may be clearly made out; so that the Nazarenes, far from fearing its consequences, have themselves taken the pains to publish them: They have caused it to be printed, accompanied with such learned notes, as cover with confusion, not only the author of this fabulous tale, but also our whole nation; fond of stories prejudicial to the Nazarenes, and incapable of distinguishing truth from falsehood\*. Those who adopt, without examination, all the calumnies that are published against our adversaries, are not aware that in doing this they furnish them with arms against themselves. Such as make use of their reason, and who are not blinded with prejudice, are filled with indignation, when they see us reasoning on facts notoriously false, and thenceforward give no sort of credit to the writings of a man who blushes not at the advancing a notorious falsehood, of which he is at the time he advances is perfectly convinced. This is the reason that the truth gains no ground,

\* The title of this work is *Historia Jeschuz Nazereni*, a Judæis blasphemie corrupta, ex manuscripto hæcenus inedito nunc demum edita, ac Versione & Notis (quibus Judæorum Nequitia propius deteguntur, & Authoris Asserta ineptia ac impietatis vincuntur,) illustrata, a Joh. Jac. Huldrico Tigurino. Lugduni Batavorum, 1705. in 8vo.

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but is in a manner obscured and buried under the falsties which accompany it.

There can be nothing so horrid, dear Isaac, as the impostures inserted in the work of which I am speaking. When our Rabbies maintain the legislator of the Nazarenes not to be the Messias, I look upon them as men acting conformable to the principles of their religion; but when they invent the most atrocious falshoods, I do not see how they are to be excused. It is a truth of publick notoriety, that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a woman, whose morals were perfectly pure. His followers say, that this woman conceived by the operation of the holy spirit. The more moderate Jews content themselves with making him the son of Joseph and Mary; but the author of this manuscript hath published, with respect to his birth, a fable every way absurd.

According to him\*, under the reign of Herod, a certain person, whose name was Papus, the son of Jeh, married a woman whose name was Miriam, the daughter of Calpus, and sister of Rabbi Simeon Hakalf. This Miriam was very handsome, and Papus her husband very jealous. He therefore took care to have her shut up constantly. His precautions, however, in the end proved fruitless. On a certain feast day, when this jealous man was gone abroad, one Joseph Pandira, a Nazarene, came under the window of Miriam's room, and spoke to her thus: Miriam! Miriam! how long will you continue thus imprisoned? To which she answered, looking out of her window, Joseph! Joseph! deliver me, and I will go with thee. Joseph went and brought a ladder, and Miriam got out of the window. They went then together to Bethlehem, and at the end of a year Miriam bore Jesus, and afterwards many sons and daughters.

Can there be any thing more absurd, dear Isaac, than this odious, this infamous falshood, to which the greatest part of our own authors give the lye,

\* Hist. Jeschuæ, pag. 4 & 5.

This the able editor of that book hath made clearly appear in his notes. He hath farther shew'd, that the Jewish author, in order to give an air of truth to his fables, hath taken several things from the Nazarene scriptures, and disfigured them to make them serve his purpose. For instance, in the close of the last passage, the sons and daughters are plainly copied from the brethren and sisters mentioned in the gospel, tho' these terms frequently signify no more than near relations.

The hatred of this Jewish writer is not sufficiently glutted, by defaming the legislator of the Nazarenes as to his birth; he therefore proceeds to make him a parricide, and his fable on this subject is more gross, and more ridiculous than the first. He tells us \*, that finding himself slighted at Nazareth on account of his birth, he went home to his mother, pretending to have the tooth-ach: he told her, that he had found in his books an easy remedy for his pain, which consisted in holding the nipple of her breasts between his teeth. The mother no sooner consented, than he told her, he would never let go his hold, until she confessed to him the truth of his birth; which when she had done, he was so enraged, that he slew Joseph, and then retired into Galilee.

Is it possible, dear Isaac, that our brethren the Jews should be so wanting to themselves, as not to stifle a book filled with such evident falsehoods? Or how is it possible they could avoid seeing that, by suffering it to go abroad in the world, they should justify the reproaches heap'd upon 'em by the Nazarenes, as on men void of all regard either for truth or decency, when violating either of them will enable them to injure their adversaries? When a philosopher reads these absurdities, and reflects that they are not only approved by the Jews, but maintained by 'em to be incontestible truths; has he not a right to conclude, that all our authors in

\* Hist. Jeschuz, dag. 32 & 33.



general are cheats and deceivers, and that such as give any credit to their works, are creatures void of common sense? Was there ever such a pitiful tale as that of the tooth-ach, and all its consequences? I say nothing of the death of Joseph, because that is a fact to which not only all the Nazarene authors give the lye, but also all the writings of our ancient Rabbins, who, amidst their most malicious reproaches, never say a word of this sort.

For my part, I am no longer astonished, Isaac, at the hatred the Nazarenes bear to us Jews. The excess to which most of our writers carry their discourses, seem to me the just cause thereof; and I am rather amazed, that, considering our behaviour, they bear with us at all. I readily own one thing, that these ridiculous tales, odious and infamous as they are, are properly treated by our adversaries, who effectually revenge the flat jests our authors break upon them, by treating their writings as they do with the utmost contempt.

Before I finish this letter, I must take notice of an attempt made by this author to ridicule a miracle of the Nazarene legislator. He went, says he\*, with two of his disciples to an inn, and asking the host if he had any thing to eat, he answer-

• Venerunt itaque inde in diversorium. Quæ it ibi Jesus ex hospite : Est-ne tibi unde hi edant ? Respondit hospes : Non mihi suppetit, nisi anserculus unus assatus. Sumit ergo Jesus anserem, illisque apponit, aiens : Anser hic exiguus nimis est, quam ut a tribus comedi debeat. Dormitum eamus : & ille, qui somniarit somnium optimum comedet anserem solus. Decumbunt igitur. Tempesta vero nocte surgit Jehuda, & anserem devorat. Mane itaque illis surgentibus, Petrus ait : Somnio mihi visus fui assidere solio filii Dei Schaddai : Jesus ait, ego sum filius ille Dei Schaddai, & somniavi te prope me federe. Ecce ergo me præstantius quid somniasse te. Quare meum erit anserem comedere. Jehuda tandem aiebat : Ego quidem ipsemet in somnio comedi anserem. Quærit ergo anserem Jesus, fed frustra ; Jehuda enim devorabat illum.

Hist. Jeschuæ, pag. 51.

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ed that he had only a goose; whereupon turning to his disciples, he said, this is too little for us all, let us go to our rest, and he that has the best dream, let him eat it when he awakes. They did so; but in the night Jehuda arose, and eat the goose. When day broke, Peter said, I dreamed I sat on the right hand of the son of God. I am he, said his master, and I dreamed thou didst sit at my right hand; mine therefore is the better dream. But Jehuda said, I dreamed that I eat the goose. Hereupon they began to look for it; but in vain, Jehuda had really eat it.

A nurse does not quiet her child with such simple stuff as this. Such low, such pitiful absurdities, were reserved for the last shifts of the Jews! Have not the Nazarenes all the reason in the world, rather to scorn and despise these mean, malicious efforts of our spight, than to be angry or in any degree vexed at them? Let us pray to the sovereign Being, dear Isaac, that he would enlighten the minds of all Israelites, teach them to despise these fables, and not to attempt to outface truth, by coining such evident and absurd rhapsodies of error and imposture.

Farewell, dear Isaac, live content and happy.

## LETTER CLIX.

Isaac Onis, points out some farther ridiculous absurdities, in the Historia Jeschuzæ, &c. and quotes several passages from that spurious History of Jesus of Nazareth; with remarks on them.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

Cairo——

I Am perfectly well acquainted, dear Monceca, with the book you mentioned in your last letter. It is one of those pitiful performances which

have sprung from the Rabbies, and is as dishonourable to Judaism, as that wretched collection of fables and visions, the Talmud. By embracing the wise system of the Caraites, I am no longer obliged to pay any regard to these fictitious writings, dictated by spleen, and which passion and prejudice have consecrated to the service of religion, or rather have veiled themselves under the specious pretence of doing religion service.

The passages you have cited from the pretended history of Jesus of Nazareth, are far from being the most ridiculous things in that collection. Behold one, which in my judgment exceeds in absurdity whatever has been written in that kind\*. "Jehuda, says that author, went to the king privately, and told him that Jesus was arrived. That prince sent the young priests to meet him, and they said to Jesus, we are neither deceivers nor wicked persons; we give credit to your discourse. All that we desire is, that you would do before us some miracle. Jesus yielded to their request, and by virtue of the all-powerful name of God, did, in their sight, many wonders. Now Jesus and his disciples did not observe the feasts appointed even on the most solemn occasions. On the great day of expiation they drank wine mingled with the waters of oblivion, and went to steep their senses in sleep. But in the night, soldiers surrounded the house wherein they were, and bound them. Jesus did all he could to recollect the all-powerful name, but he could not.—The soldiers then conducted him and his disciples to a certain prison, called the House of Blasphemy, because they had blasphemed God. In the morning therefore it was told the king, that Jesus and his followers were apprehended. The king gave directions thereupon, that they should be kept close prisoners until the Feast of Tabernacles, when, as the law of Moses directs, all the people came to assemble before the Lord.

\* Hist. Jeschuz, pag. 67, 68, & 69.

Then the king gave command that Jesus's disciples should be carried out of Jerusalem, and stoned; which was executed before the eyes of all Israel, who sang songs of joy, and rendered glory to God, for having enabled them to punish thus these wicked men."

Without animadverting, dear Monceca, on the numerous falsities and notorious blunders in this passage, which are so easily and effectually destroy'd, not only by the Nazarene, but also by our own historians, give me leave to mark out an evident absurdity which every unlearned reader must discern. If the disciples of Jesus were stoned about the feast of Tabernacles, and himself crucified some small time after, without ever coming out of prison, how came the sect of the Nazarenes to spread, and to become so powerful? Who were they who went to propagate its doctrines into the most distant climates? How, being thus destroyed in the beginning, came it to spring again out of its ashes? The rabbinical historian foresaw some of these difficulties, and endeavoured to provide against them, but in as lame a manner as if he had drank some of his own waters of oblivion, which hindered Jesus from recollecting the all-powerful name. Is it not an incontestible method of proving facts, to ground the evidence produced in their favour, on poetical pagan fictions, and the dreams of the Cabbalists, the greatest fools in the whole world? For there, Monceca, amongst these worthy people must we find the sources of this water of oblivion, which never swelled any streams but those of Lethe, and that boundless powers of the ineffable name, which indeed has had the power of turning the heads of innumerable Cabbalists past all recovery.

This man, whose writings you contemn so much, ought, in my opinion, to hold the supreme rank among worthless authors, for I think verily none of his brethren ever came up to what he has written concerning the establishment of Nazarenism



after the death of Jesus\*. "It came to pass, says he, that the inhabitants of Ai having heard that Jesus was crucified, had a sharp dispute with the Israelites. They slew all they could meet with, and having murdered upwards of two thousand, the Israelites durst no longer go up to the temple on the appointed feasts. The king therefore made war upon the inhabitants of Ai, but he found it impracticable to subdue them. There were however, at this time, in the city, a great number of seditious spirits, lovers of novelties and prone to insurrections. Some of these unquiet people found means to confer with certain persons who dwelt in Ai, and told them a thousand fables. They said, that three days after the death of Jesus, fire fell from Heaven, surrounded his body, restored him to life, and that he afterwards ascended to Heaven. The inhabitants of Ai giving credit to all that they were told, became more and more determined to revenge on the Israelites the death of Jesus, whom they thought unjustly crucified. Jehuda knowing the dispositions of the citizens of Ai, wrote to them to dissuade them in these terms: The peace of God rests not on the impious; why then do the people suffer themselves to be deluded with lyes? Come to Jerusalem, and bury your supposed prophet, &c. Hereupon the inhabitants of Ai sent deputies to Jerusalem, who were shewn the body of Jesus where it was interred. These deputies returning to the city, instead of giving glory to the truth, affirmed all that was contained in Jehuda's epistle to be notorious lyes and falsehoods; as also that numbers, in Jerusalem itself, were come over to Jesus, and had revolted against the king. On this news the people of Ai cut the throats of many wise citizens who had been enemies to Jesus, and continued the war as vigorously as ever against the Israelites."

\* Hist. Jeschuz, pag. 95, 96, 97.

Behold, Monceca, a series of facts, of which no other author, Pagan or Christian, ever spake a word. It is really matter of surprize, how a person ever so well trained to lying, could, without blushing, give such a romance as this to the world as true history. This Rabbi ought at least to have given some appearance of truth to his fictions. There never was any thing so ill contrived, so in-connected, or so contradictory, as to say, that the disciples of Jesus were stoned, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were pleased therewith; that people from Ai came and saw the dead body of Jesus; and yet that these very people should fight most zealously in his quarrel. Have not the Nazarenes all the reason in the world to treat our Rabbies as a crew of impostors, and to decry Judaism, because built upon their writings, and consequently resting on a wretched mass of lyes, ridiculous fictions, and groundless calumnies?

If all our brethren of the house of Israel were of the same disposition with the Caraites, they would not stand in fear of any such reproaches. Our faith is grounded solely on the sacred scriptures. Our oracles alone are infallible, and therefore we are never deceived. In order to defend our cause against the Christians, we are not obliged to have recourse to frauds unworthy of an honest man. They attack us from the scriptures, and in the same scriptures we find matter for our defence. If they could once prove to our satisfaction the prophecies to be accomplished, we should readily go over to their faith. But we do not conceive this possible, that the great lamp of Israel should as yet have shined amongst us. When he shall appear, his light shall be visible unto all. It will be to no purpose to shut our eyes. His rays will pierce through the thickest darkness; and therefore we ought not to suppose the Messiah, coming to free all the Jews, should leave the greatest part of them in ignorance and blindness.

This,

This, dear Monceca, is the capital argument against the Nazarenes. They say the Messiah is come. What good has he done the Jews? For from them, and for them, the scriptures say, he was to come into the world. However, all sorts of mischiefs have fallen on our nation. We are all driven from Jerusalem. The temple of the living God is destroyed. Sacrifices are no longer offered. We are a prey to the malice, hatred, and cruelty of all nations. Are these the blessings promised on the coming of the Messiah? Is this the shining star which was to illuminate Israel, which was to bring us prosperity without end? Our miseries prove but too strongly, that our redeemer is not come. When he shall truly appear, the Nazarenes themselves will easily know him by the favours which he will bestow upon us. He shall lead us forth out of slavery, and our liberty, our glory, our good fortune, shall become such shining evidences, as to convince even the most obstinate and the most infatuated of our enemies.

Farewel, dear Monceca, live content and happy, and depend on my giving you, in my next, some farther remarks on the impertinent works of this rabbinical, impostor.

## LETTER CLX.

More quotations from the Historia Jeschuxæ; with observations thereon, wherein the author of that scandalous work appears to be a stupid, abominable wicked liar.

ISAAC ONIS, to AARON MONCECA.

Lisbon.—

**I** Promised you, dear Monceca, to write to you once again, on the head of the absurdities and falsities which the Rabbins have inserted in the life of the legislator of the Nazarenes. I shall begin with a passage

sage which follows that I copied in my last, and which the shameless, ridiculous historian continues in these terms\*.

“ The king and the wisemen about him, observing that the Aitans grew every day more powerful, and that the number of innovators and impious persons encreased continually, among whom the relations of Jesus eminently distinguish'd themselves, deliberated seriously what measures it became them to take; inviting Jehuda to council, and intreating him to give his advice freely. To which Jehuda answer'd thus: Behold Simeon Hakkalpasi, uncle to Jesus: He is a most venerable old man. Discover to him all the mysteries and all properties of the All-powerful Name. When you have done all this, let him go immediately to citizens of Ai; let him perform before their eyes signs and wonders; and let him say, these things I do by the power of another. The people of that city will undoubtedly believe he does all this by the power of Jesus; the phrase being exactly calculated to deceive them. For these words, By the power, or through the virtue of Another, imply, in the rabbinical style, acting by constraint, and, as it were, under the direction of Another. Beyond all doubt, the citizens of Ai will give entire credit to what Simeon, the uncle of Jesus, shall say to them; and then he must persuade them, that it is the will of Jesus they should cease to persecute the Israelites, because he would revenge himself in an exemplary manner. The king, and all the wisemen who were with him, approved the advice given by Jehuda. They sent instantly for old Simeon, and declar'd to him all they had resolv'd upon. Swear to me, said he, that I shall never suffer reproach hereafter, on account of what you command me, and I shall obey you in all things with pleasure. I will lead your enemies into criminal opinions, and will engage them to put an end to the war they carry on against you.

\* Hist. Jeschuz, p. 100----115.



The wisemen and elders swore then to Simeon, as he had desired, and revealed unto him the mysteries of the all-powerful Name.

“ He set out immediately; and when he came into the neighbourhood of Ai, he form’d a thick dark cloud, whence lightnings play’d continually. He placed himself thereupon and spoke thence to the people thus: Hear me, ye inhabitants of Ai, call an assembly at the foot of the tower, and I will inform you of the commands of Jesus. The inhabitants, extremely frightened, ran together in crouds. Simeon riding on his cloud, came also unto the same place, and descended at last on the tower. The citizens of Ai prostrated themselves at his feet; and he then spake to them after this manner: I am Simeon Hakkalpath, uncle to Jesus, who came to me lately, and sent me unto you, to inform you of his will; he is the son of God, and I will teach you his law. Then did he many strange miracles; insomuch that the inhabitants of Ai believed him, and said, we will obey you in whatever you command; and whatever you direct us, that will we do. Simeon thereupon ordain’d, that they should retire to their houses; while he, remaining in the tower, compiled wicked and prejudicial laws, according as he had promised the king and the elders. He changed likewise the alphabet, and gave new names to the letters, to serve as a secret index, that all he taught them was lies and impostures. Now the alphabet he invented ran thus: a, be, ce, de, e, ef, cha, i, ke, el, em, en, o, p, qu, er, es, te, u, icx, etzet, zet. Of which this is the explication: My father was Esau the hunter, and he was faint, &c. He composed also many books in the names of the disciples of Jesus; and particularly, the revelations in the name of John, &c.”

Do you think, dear Monceca, that among the tales of the faries, there is any thing more ridiculous than this tale of Hakkalpath? Is it possible for man to devise a more monstrous or more absurd story than the extravagant fiction of the law, given from an  
high

high tower by a person riding thither on a cloud. The oath he exacted of the elders, that the fraud he used against the dwellers in Ai should not prejudice his salvation, and their promise thereupon, is it not wounding all morality to the quick? Where is, I will not say the honest man, but where is the villain, who will dare to maintain, that it is lawful, under colour of serving any religion, to deceive a whole people, and persuade them to commit the greatest crimes, under colour of obeying the will of God?

This rabbinical historian had notions no way reconcilable to equity or right reason. It seems that he was as much a cheat as a liar; and that he approved, in his heart, any sort of frauds which might turn to advantage. Of this, nothing can be a stronger instance than the following passage, in his own words\*. “ Rabbi AK, says he, went to Nazareth, and informed himself where Mezaria, the wife of Carchat, dwelt. As soon as he knew it, he transported himself thither, and found Miriam all alone, her husband being gone abroad. Daughter, said he, it is by the special favour of Heaven that I have found you alone, your husband being abroad. I conjure

\* R. AK igitur Nazaretham it, exque incolis urb's inquit, ubinam habitet Mezaria, conjugio juncta cum Karchat. Monstrant indigenæ Rabbino Ædes, quas cum adiisset A. K, non offendit ibi maritum, sed uxorem solam; illam itaque ita affatur: Filia mea, singulari domini providentia effectum est quod maritus tuus domi non sit. Ego itaque te per dominum Deum cœlorum adjuro, ut edicas mihi, quæ studia tua, & sint, & fuerint olim; tibi que (fideliter gesta narranti) spondeo seculum futurum. Respondit ei uxor: Jura, quæso, mihi per nomen domini. Jusjurandum confestim præstat R. AK, Ore suo, ed corde illud nullum facit. Tunc uxor ita ad eum loquitur: Meriam ego sum, soror Simeonis Hakkalph, uxor Papi. Ausugi vero cum Josepho Pandira, & procreavit ille ex me liberos spurios Bethlehemæ. Eo autem tempore, quo Herodes illuc venit nos lapidaturus, in Ægyptum fugimus. Ibi cum ingravesceret Annona, huc revertimur, nominaque nostra immutamus, ne noscerent nos homines. Hæc cum audisset R. AK, Vestes laceravit eique ita edixit, &c. Hist. Jeschua, p. 24 & 25.

you

you to tell me truly your adventures; and if you inform me justly, I promise you everlasting happiness. Rabbi Ak, also to satisfy her, gave her his oath; but it was lips only swore, and he promised nothing in heart. Then the woman, to whom he spake, answered: I am Miriam, sister to Simeon Hakkalaph, &c. Rabbi Ak having heard all her story, rent his clothes, &c."

Behold, dear Monceca, in this Rabbi Ak a most extraordinary person. He makes no sort of difficulty of swearing falsely, and of invoking the holy name of God, to give weight to his abominable lies. He tears his clothes, however, at the news told him by Miriam; as if adultery was a greater crime than premeditated perjury. But a man, like this worthy writer, seldom examines nicely what he delivers. How should we expect any thing wise or sage from so great a fool, so mere a beast as this ignorant Rabbi?

I will conclude this letter with a comic and most extravagant adventure of some of the disciples of Jesus, which this wise author thus gravely sets down: "Simeon Hakkalaph, says he, went to the king, and said, that if he would give him leave to act as he thought fit, he would presently destroy all the followers of Jesus, who were in the city of Jerusalem. The king answer'd, I give you my consent; go, and the lord be with you. Then Simeon went to the innovators, and said, Come, let us go to Ai; there you shall see the signs and wonders I have done by the power of Jesus, and those which I am yet to perform. Numbers therefore of these impious persons took the road to Ai, as he directed, and others rode with him in a cloud. But as they went thither, Simeon pushed them out of the cloud, and threw them on the ground, where they lay slain. Simeon returning thereupon to Jerusalem, told the adventure to the king, which gave him great pleasure; and thenceforward Simeon never stirred from the court of that prince \*?"

\* Hist. Jeschuæ, p. 125, 126.

I would ask you, dear Monceca, did I wrong, to embrace the prudent sentiments of the Caraites, and ought I to have rested in a sect, the principal doctors whereof espouse such absurd impertinencies? If one studied to invent a fable, capable of turning a whole work into ridicule, could one have succeeded better than this Rabbi? I do not believe, that in all Ariosto, there is a more whimsical vision than this of carrying men, whom we would destroy, into the air in a cloud, and then breaking their necks from thence. A person vested with such powers, who knew not how to open new roads through the air, did he stand in need of such an extraordinary expedient as this, to put such criminals to death? He might questionless have punish'd them in a common method, he who had such gifts, and not have troubled himself to carry folks along in a cloud; and then hazard the laming some honest man, by throwing them down on his head? Surely, surely, my friend, none but a Rabbi would ever have been such a visionary, as to think of raining men.

Farewel, live content and happy, and may the great God cover thee with prosperities, give thee perfect health, and the victory over all thy enemies.

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## LETTER CLXI.

A description of the city of Algiers; which is subject to the European Turks, and not to the Africans.—The reason of the Africans becoming slaves to the Turks.—The power of the dey.—An historical relation concerning Amurath, dey of Tunis.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Algiers—

**I**T is now a week, my dear Monceca, since my arrival in Africa. I had a very propitious voyage from Lisbon to Algiers; and the winds, after  
 Vol. IV. E detaining



detaining me some time in Portugal, at last indulged my desire.

This city is built in the form of an amphitheatre, and stands at the foot of a mountain. The prospect of it from the sea is pleasing; but no sooner is the spectator come on shore, but he forms a very different idea of the place. Most of the houses are low and of a very unpleasing structure; and the streets are very narrow and dirty. Algiers, if not so large, would appear just like the poor villages in the road from Turin to Lyons. I do not know on what authority Moreri relies, when he tells us that there are magnificent palaces in this city. The finest houses there are infinitely less splendid than the most indifferent houses in Europe. To figure to yourself a just idea of the dey's palace, you must suppose four or five large taverns, half tottering, all thrown into one. The pier is the only edifice worthy of our curiosity. At the end of it a noble tower is built, which serves as a light-house. It is of a considerable height, and well fortified with cannon; the Turks having improved the fortifications of it since the last bombardment. The Algerines flatter themselves that this tower will secure them from any future insult of the like nature; because ships cannot now advance near enough to the city, to bombard it, without running the hazard of being sunk by the batteries on the pier. But the Europeans who are here, declare, that the Algerines build upon very fantastic hopes; and that their new works could have no other effect, than to render a bombardment not quite so easy an attempt as before.

The people who bear sway in Algiers are not the Africans, who, on the contrary, are extremely submissive to, and properly the slaves of the European Turks. The old inhabitants of the country are under a most cruel government; and there is a wide difference between the Algerines called Moors, and those called Turks. Perhaps thou mayest not be displeased if I inform thee of the cause of this distinction

inction (as it was told me) made between people born in the same country, and professing the same religion.

When Africa was entirely Mahomedan, those who are called Moors, and who were then the sole inhabitants of it, at the same time that they changed their religion, enjoyed the supreme command in their own country; and so far from being subject to foreigners, they achieved mighty conquests in Europe, and even invaded the greatest part of Spain. A long series of years after these conquests, several Turks of the Levant came and settled on the coast of Barbary, where they met with a more favourable reception. As the Moors, by their crossing into Spain, had greatly diminished the number of their forces; the inhabitants were vastly glad to compensate for this loss by the arrival of these new ones. Their numbers increased by insensible degrees; when at last, finding themselves strong enough to seize upon the government, they made an insurrection, possessed themselves of all the authority, appointed a king or dey of their own nation; and left the ancient Africans no more than an empty shadow of liberty. They added contempt to their severity, and enacted a law, by which it is enjoined, that any Moor, who presumes so much as to threaten a Turk, shall have his hand cut off, and be put to death. The Turks in the Levant think it a dishonour to marry into a Moorish family; and it may be affirm'd, that they shew as much aversion to them, as the Nazarenes do to our nation.

When the Africans were totally drove out of Spain, and obliged to return to their native country, they besought the Turks, who were now possess'd of it, to suffer them to make it their asylum. This being granted, they submitted to the same conditions with their countrymen who had been subdued; and thought themselves happy in being able to be indulged a secure retreat, though the terms upon which it was granted were very severe. The Turks have preserved all their authority since this change; they be-

ing possess'd of all the principal employments in the state, and absolute masters of the government. As the Moors are much more numerous than those, they very frequently send for a great number of families from the Levant, to supply the place of such Turkish ones as were just before extinct; so that the ancient inhabitants of the country cannot entertain the least hopes of ever being able to recover their former prerogatives. One would even conclude that they had lost all the remembrance of it; and that they are now entirely habituated to their state of slavery. Besides, they are masters of so little courage, that they would never presume to employ force, to recover their liberty. An hundred Turks would beat two thousand Moors, and attack them at once with the utmost intrepidity. Thus, as the Turks are so strongly persuaded of the cowardice of the Moors, and the Moors of the prodigious valour of the Turks, these govern the others with the greatest ease, and enjoy a despotic sway.

Though all the kingdom of Algiers, whether Turks or Moors, call themselves subjects to the grand Signior, we nevertheless may consider this state as a free republic, whose government resides wholly within itself. The Turks elect their dey; and how strongly soever he may be protected by the grand Signior, they yet will dethrone him; and even strangle him, whenever they are inclined to, or imagine they have a just cause for it. The dey does not enjoy entirely a supreme power; but is obliged, in such matters as are essential to the government, to act in conformity to the decisions of the divan, which transacts the principal affairs. This council is composed of the chief inhabitants of the city.

The dey's power is not limited with regard to particular persons. He may, without having recourse to forms of law, behead the first men of the kingdom. Some of these deys are exceedingly free in the use of this power; especially if they are apprehensive of a sedition, or want to possess the wealth of some grandee. But notwithstanding these cruel executions,

executions, very few deys but one time or other come to a fatal end. The government of the African states bears a resemblance to that of ancient Rome; the soldiers are as insolent and wavering as the Roman legions; and most of the Algerine sovereigns imitate Caligula, Nero, and Dioclesian.

As it is guilt that generally raises the deys to the throne, it commonly drives them from it. A prince reigns no longer in Africa, than till some man rises up, who, at the hazard of his life, undertakes to murder him. Three or four persons have often been seen to conspire against the monarch, and assassinate him in the midst of his army, without its having the least knowledge of, or expecting any such conspiracy. A surprising circumstance is, this same army has been seen to recognize one of the murderers for its sovereign; which revolution has been brought about with as little disturbance, as if only the meanest wretch had been bereaved of life.

AMURATH, dey of Tunis, had exercised the most unheard of cruelties in his kingdom; and, unhappily for his subjects, he had always been so fortunate as to discover the conspiracies that had been form'd against him. These discoveries were followed by the most cruel executions, in which the innocent frequently suffered with the guilty. He sacrificed to his suspicions such as he imagined were not entirely devoted to him. Ibrahim, aga of the Spahis, resolved, singly, to compleat an attempt which had so often miscarried; and without communicating his design to any person. The dey having set out from Tunis, at the head of his army, to go and give battle to the Moors of the mountains; Ibrahim, whilst he was on his second day's march, took the instant when that prince was in his coach, and stopped by a small river; and discharged a musket, loaded with several bullets at him. The dey happened to be only slightly wounded on this occasion; but Mahommed, the dey's favourite, who was in the coach, lost his life. Amurath endeavouring to jump out of the coach, in



order to revenge himself that moment, his robe was entangled in the coach-door, whereby he fell down, which gave Ibrahim an opportunity of striking off his head with his sabre. During this whole action, which lasted half a quarter of an hour at least, the dey's guards, who were far from expecting such a scene, did but look on, without once offering to assist their sovereign. Only one Turk, after all the rest had forsaken their prince, attempted to defend him, and fired a pistol at Ibrahim. But the instant he perceived the dey was dead, he fled; and endeavoured to save himself from the anger of the new dey, who never fails to protect the murderers of his predecessor, as he owes his throne to them.

It even happens very often, that the crown is placed on the head of the murderer, as it was on the present occasion, Ibrahim being recognized dey, and enjoying, in this manner, the fruits of his guilt. The fate his predecessor had met with, proved to him how uncertain his own was. Experience taught him, that the same guilt which had raised him to the throne might as easily force him from it: For which reason he endeavoured to inspire the Turks with different ideas of glory; and to make them sensible, that it is just and glorious in subjects to exert themselves to the utmost of their power, in order to preserve the life of their sovereign. Soon after this, the Turk, who had fired the pistol, was brought before him, when every one was persuaded that he would have put him to a very cruel death. However the new dey, so far from giving orders for this purpose, received him with a smiling countenance, saying, that he did not consider things in the same light with other people; that he esteemed him infinitely, for having so zealously defended his sovereign, to whom he had so many obligations; and, desiring the favour of his friendship, appointed him aga\*.

Were we to read, dear Monceca, so generous an action in a Latin author, we should give it the de.

\* This event happened a little after duke d'Etrees had renewed the treaties at Tunis.

served applause; it would be published all over Europe; and be proposed as a model, in such books as might be wrote for the education of a prince. But happening in a barbarous country, and being performed by a monarch who is very little known, it will be buried in eternal oblivion, in case some person, a true lover of merit, in what country soever it may be found, does not transmit it to posterity. I will grant, dear Monceca, that possibly the generous pardon granted by Ibrahim did not result so much from greatness of soul, as from a political view of winning over other subjects to his party; and of preparing himself a defence against any person who might presume to take away his life. But whatever might be the motive of so heroic an action, it must still be confessed, that there is something great and wonderful in it. Were we to enquire into the secret cause of the steps taken by the most illustrious princes, there are very few but what might be ascribed to political views. The clemency which Augustus shew'd to Cinna, is considered as one of the noblest actions in that emperor's life: But was he not prompted by self-interest on that occasion? He had found that the most bloody proscriptions could not secure his life; for this reason he was resolved to try what gentle methods would do, and he found them successful.

I do not doubt, dear Monceca, that were the African princes to imitate the sovereigns of Europe, in the government of their subjects, but they at last would succeed so far as to inspire them with sentiments of love and veneration for their monarchs. But how can they hope to enjoy any share in their affection, if they are their executioners rather than their fathers? The dey of Algiers is an enemy to every individual; and his only study is to contrive some pretence or other, in order to divest his subjects of their possessions, and put them to death. These, in return, pay obedience to him only because they are forced to it; and wait impatiently for the moment in which they may free themselves from his tyranny.

tyranny. Is it not natural to expect the most dreadful storms and revolutions, in a state where the subjects are enemies to the sovereign, and the sovereign the destroyer of his subjects? I look upon the deys of Algiers as leeches, who glut themselves with blood till they burst. The monarch, in this country, plunders, robs and murders during a course of years. The instant he imagines he is going to enjoy the fruits of his rapine, he meets with the fate his crime deserved; and is punished by some person who commits the like guilt; and who could not be prompted to take virtuous courses from the example of his predecessors; and consequently is not more happy, nor more secure on his throne.

Adieu, dear Monceca; may you live contented, happy and unruffled.

## LETTER. CLXII.

Some account of the Algerine women.—The punishment inflicted on them for adultery with a Nazarene.—Their gallants have a method of carrying on a love intrigue by disposing the flowers in a nosegay so as to convey their ideas.—A remarkable story of a Moorish young lady, and her Portuguese slave.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Algiers.—

THE Women, dear Monceca, are indulged with much more liberty throughout all Barbary, than in the Levant; and the Algerine women are less confined than the rest of the Africans. They are allowed to go out whenever they they please, upon pretence of going to the Bath; being commonly accompanied by some Christian she-slaves, who are as so many waiting-women. Those women, whose husbands are very rich, are preceded by a man who serves as a conductor. This man is always a slave on whose

whose fidelity the husband relies very much ; but he is frequently imposed on by the man in whom he confides. As eunuchs are bought at a very dear price in this country, and can be employed in nothing but in superintending the women, they not being robust enough to undertake laborious toils, the Algerines have no concern with them. They prefer Nazarene slaves, who are of great service, being employed by them in works of every kind. It must indeed be confessed, that the liberty which slaves are allow'd of being in the company of women, and even of speaking to them, is frequently of dangerous consequence to the repose and honour of husbands.

The female-sex are still more devoted to gallantry in this country than in Constantinople. The climate inspires fondness ; and the scorching air raises in the heart such a flame as nothing can extinguish. An African woman will brave every sort of danger and run any hazard to satiate her passion ; and cannot be intimidated even by the fear of death. There is a law enacted here which is strictly put in execution, pursuant to which, any woman who is convicted of being engaged in a criminal correspondence with a Nazarene, is sentenced to be tost into the sea, her head tied in a sack, in case her lover does not turn Mahommedan. Examples of this severe punishment are frequently seen ; notwithstanding which, the married women and maidens are fired with a most violent passion for the Nazarenes ; and there perhaps are as many intrigues in Algiers as in any Nazarene city. The little affection they bear to their husbands, and the constraint that is put upon them, excite them to break the marriage-vow. Farther, the indolence in which they pass their days, they being confined to their houses, where their sole employment is to invent methods in order to over-reach their tyrants, and the long voyages these commonly undertake, greatly favour their intrigues. They sometimes are eight or nine months at sea ; and whilst they are plundering and



and destroying the Nazarenes, such as are slaves in Algiers revenge part of the ills which those of their faith suffer.

When these corsairs are upon their expeditions, they generally keep their wives in the city, but the moment of their return, they take them to their country-houses, where they unbend after the many hardships they have undergone at sea. The liberty allowed the women of walking in the gardens, gives them an opportunity of continuing their intrigues. If they can speak to their lovers only by stealth, they find an opportunity of explaining their meaning, by ranging the flower-pots in a certain order.

Artifice and love have invented such a language in this country as is unknown to all others. A slave who is in love with, and beloved by his mistress, is able to explain the several impulses of his heart, by the manner in which he disposes a parterre. A nosegay made in a certain manner contains as many tender and passionate ideas, as could be thrown into a letter of eight pages in length. The flower-gentle being placed by the violet signifies that the lover hopes, after the husband is gone away, to compensate for all the evils which his presence occasions. The orange-flower denotes hope. The marigold implies despair. The amaranth shews constancy. The tulip reproaches with being unfaithful. And the rose supposes an encomium of beauty.

From the particular attributes ascribed to these flowers a perfect language is formed. If a lover, for instance, was desirous of acquainting his mistress, that the torments he suffers have brought him to the brink of despair; if he never expected to be made happy again by the absence of his rival; in this case, he forms a nosegay of a marigold, an orange-flower, a flower-gentle, and a violet. The slaves easily find an opportunity to communicate those billet-doux to their mistresses, there being some secret place in the garden where they always place them.

them. Answers are returned after the same manner; for by gathering some flowers, they form their letters of them, undiscovered by any spectator; the signification of the principle letters being sometimes known only to two persons, who never fail to make several deviations from the language commonly used, to prevent their being discovered.

You must own, dear Monceca, that love only could have been industrious enough, to invent so ingenious a method to elude the care and foresight of jealous husbands. What will not two lovers effect, when necessity forces them to have recourse to stratagems? I was lately told a story, which will equally touch and surprize all readers who are unacquainted with the violent lengths to which love will carry the African women.

The only daughter of one of the richest Moors in this country entertained a passion for a Portuguese slave. The girl, pursuant to the custom established in Africa, made the first advances. Neither the large fortune she justly expected, nor the groveling condition of her lover could divert the resolution she had taken to marry him; and notwithstanding the obstacles which she foresaw, with regard to the execution of her project, nothing could make her lose the hopes of giving success to it. The Portuguese, struck with the thoughts of his good fortune, offered the fond maid, the moment she discovered her passion, to run away with her to Lisbon, which might have been done easily enough; and the Narene might have escaped, by the assistance furnished him by Zulima, for such was the name of our beautiful female African. She was sensible that the expedient proposed by her lover was the most rational; and almost the only one that could bring her to her wished for happiness. But being a zealous Mahomedan, and firmly persuaded of the truth of her religion, she could not consent to retire to a country where she would have been forced to quit her faith. "I love you, Sebastiano, said she to her lover,

lover, much more than I do myself. Grief will kill me if I am not made your wife, and yet I can never prevail with myself to purchase my happiness at the price of my faith. 'Tis not impossible but we may be happy in this country, without running the hazard of being discovered in case we should fly. Change your religion. Remove, by turning Mahomedan, the chief obstacle that keeps us asunder; and leave the rest to me." The Nazarene was much less attached to his religion than the female Mahomedan: Not to mention that the fear of totally losing his mistress, the desire of recovering his liberty, and the hopes of acquiring a great fortune, had the strongest influence on his resolutions. He promised to comply with any thing she might require of him; and upon a solemn promise made by him to quit the religion of the Nazarenes whenever it should be necessary, the charming Moor indulged him in whatever love was capable of bestowing.

These favours served only to strengthen the passion which Sebastiano felt for her. The fear he was under of one day losing his dear Zulima increased his fondness; and his mistress was in the like frame of mind. Her whole attention was to give success to the design she had in view, but she found new obstacles every moment; when on a certain day, at a time she least expected it, her father declared, that he intended to marry her to one of the principal men of the country. These words were as a thunder-bolt to the maiden. In the first transports of her grief she resolved to fall at her father's feet, and open her whole soul to him. Nevertheless, she did not yet dare to comply with her first impulses, for fear of exposing her husband to the anger of an exasperated master which might probably carry him to the greatest lengths.

In this dilemma Zulima resolved to make use of an expedient which was equally extraordinary and infallible, in order to succeed in her design. She

bid her lover meet her at a certain place, whither she went upon pretence of going to the bath, and was attended only by one woman. Sebastiano, being come to the place appointed, had like to have died with sorrow, upon hearing that his mistress was going to enter into the marriage state. However, Zulima bid him take heart, telling him that she hoped fortune would soon become more propitious to them. She then ordered the woman who had accompanied her, and was her confident, to go and inform the Cadi, that her mistress was in such a place, in the arms of a Nazarene. The attendant obeying, the judge came with his subaltern officers, and surprized the two lovers in the midst of their warmest transports, when they were instantly conveyed to the prison where criminals are tried. Zulima's father, being told the accident which had happened to his daughter, was seized with despair; upon which he flew to the prison in order to see her. There he was told, that he could not be admitted to speak to her, 'till such time as her trial was over. The enquiry was now making whether the Nazarene slave would turn Mahommedan and that if he would comply on that occasion, the two lovers should be married together, pursuant to the laws; but that in case of his refusal he should be impaled, and his daughter drowned in the sea.

Mustapha, for this was the name of Zulima's father, knew but too well what punishment would be inflicted on his daughter, in case the Portuguese refused to turn Mussulman. And indeed the only motive which prompted Mustapha to desire a fight of them, was to offer him wealth, and engage the Nazarene to change his religion. He had no occasion to make use of any rhetoric to exhort them to prefer life to a cruel death; for the moment he made the overtures, Sebastiano answered, that he would gladly embrace the religion proposed by Zulima, and marry her; and the father thought



himself happy in having an opportunity of preserving the life of his only daughter on these conditions.

Few women in Europe, dear Monceca, would have recourse to such expedients, in order to have the satisfaction of obtaining a lover. Their passion, in general, is much fainter than that of the African women; but then their flame is much more constant and durable. One of these shall sometimes be fired with the strongest passion, which in an instant shall be extinguished: They shift successively from one inclination to another; and are as fickle, and as wavering, as they are tender and passionate, in those moments when their fondness is at its greatest height.

It is certain, dear Monceca, that such inclinations and endearingnesses, as are productive of the most extraordinary effects, are not commonly the most lasting. We often see in Europe a great number of young fellows give into the highest extravagancies for the sake of their mistresses; two months after which they shall forsake them, and grow as ridiculously fond of others, whose reign is of no longer date; whereas persons of a certain age, who seem to curb their passions, and subject them to reason form such tenderesses as are sometimes as lasting as life.

The slavery to which the female Africans are reduced is likewise one of the chief causes of their fickleness. They find a secret satisfaction in violating the constraint they are laid under. Their husbands, by endeavouring to prevent their being unfaithful, inspire them with an earnest desire of being so; and they strongly covet a pleasure, which they are forbid on the severest penalties. This example of their husbands who exhibit to them proofs every day, that a change of the object in love, is a charm in which the heart always meets with fresh delights, raises their desires. It is extremely natural for them to suppose, that inconstancy

fancy gives an opportunity of enjoying the most delicious pleasures.

Adieu, dear Monceca, and may the God of our fathers give thee an abundance of blessings of every kind; and bestow a wife upon thee, who may make thee happy in a numerous posterity.

## L E T T E R CLXIII.

The freedom of exercising all forms of religion tolerated in England, gives rise to numberless controversies.—Some instances, by way of illustration.

AARON MONCECA, to ISAAC ONIS.

London——

**R**eligious disputes, dear Isaac, are more common in this country than in any other. The liberty which the English are allowed, of asserting their opinions publicly, gives rise to a great number of pieces which are published daily. Those of the church of England write against the Papists, the Papists against the Presbyterians, the Presbyterians against the Lutherans, the Lutherans against the Socinians, and the Socinians against the Anabaptists, who also publish controversial writings. A man is surprized when he examines, with a philosophic eye, all these different disputes; and the little stress that ought to be laid on the particular opinion of some doctors, who set themselves up as supreme judges of the belief of mankind. I fancy, dear Isaac, that if persons had been forbid to dispute in any religion whatever, on such subjects as they did not understand; and that the divines had been commanded, not to attempt to clear up such doctrines and other points as they could never understand, there never could have risen that multiplicity of opinions, whence a numberless multitude of differ-

rent religions have sprung, and will give birth to many more. And if a stop is not put to these vain disputes, especially among the Nazarenes; the consequence will be, that, by their divisions and separations from their several communions, every man will at last entertain his peculiar belief.

Consider, dear Isaac, how pernicious the writings of the Rabbies have been to the Jews. The difference between the Rabbinites and the Caraites is owing chiefly to the Talmud. According to some of our modern authors, the Rabbinites are divided into two different sects. The Portuguese Jews declare that the German Jews do not observe the true precepts of the law: And the Germans think that the Portuguese are a parcel of heretics, whose manners and customs favour too strongly of the Nazarene principles.

The Mahomedans are still more divided than the Jews. Besides the sects of Omar and Ali, there are computed only in the city of Constantinople, fourscore and seven communions; all which bear almost as great a hatred one to the other as the Jesuits do to the Jansenists.

The Nazarenes are so disunited, that some new religion is seen starting up among them almost every day. As soon as a divine gains some reputation, several rise up, who endeavour to diminish his fame and reputation. These attack his opinions, and declare them to be heretical. The adherents of the doctor whose sentiments are condemned seldom fail of siding with their master; and, by that means, of forming a new communion. Then it is that a flood of new writings are published on both sides: They rail at one another, they inveigh, they calumniate; and charge each other with ignorance and insincerity; they give the most opprobrious, the most shocking names, to their adversaries as well as to their opinions. In religious disputes, such as are not able to answer the objections made to them, think they support their opinions sufficiently, if they treat those who oppose them with contempt.

I read,

I read, some days since, the work of a Socinian\*, who affects to bestow the odious name of Tritheism on the doctrine of his adversaries, tho' they expressly declare that they do not acknowledge three Gods. It must be confessed, dear Isaac, that we cannot charge the Nazarene sect, without incurring the guilt of a most contemptible insincerity, as admitting a plurality of gods. Their whole religion, on the contrary, is intirely founded on the unity of one single being, creator of the universe. And indeed I will confess to thee, that I conceived the highest indignation at the book of the Socinian in question.

Sincerity and candor ought to season every action of our lives, and even have a place in such contests as we may be engaged in with our enemies. But is it not surprizing that men should exclaim against, and load with injurious reproaches, persons whom they profess to enlighten, and lead into the paths of truth? Is not this a most odd way of prejudicing them in favour of the opinions we would make them imbibe; and is not this method of preparing their minds for the reception of such arguments as are to be offered them altogether singular and extraordinary?

I have observed, dear Isaac, that the passion of those who dispute on religious matters is so wild and extravagant, that they inconsiderately vent against them the most cruel reproaches, which these have a just right to retort. The Nazarenes in general are very guilty of this fault; and a great many of their most eminent divines have not been exempt from it. Nay, some of those divines who wrote against the heathens, have employed such arguments as were of service to their adversaries. Arnobius has very vigorously refuted the plurality of

\* A letter to a friend, with remarks on two pamphlets lately published in defence of Tritheism; viz. a Brief Enquiry by J. T. and the Socinian Stain by J. H.



the heathen Deities †. He has solidly refuted the absurdity of supposing a set of gods who are direct opponents one of the other, and who declared in favour of certain nations that were persecuted by other Deities. Pallas hated the Trojans; whereas they were favoured by Apollo and Venus\*. How unhappy soever a man might be, if he could but make some little offering to any of the Deities among the great numbers who were established, he was sure to obtain the protection of one of them.

Nothing can be so absurd as a religion of this kind. But might not the Pagans justly make the following answer to the Nazarenes? "The same difficulties which you object to us are found in your opinions. When one of your religion chuses St. Anthony for his protector, and his enemy takes St. Pacomius for his, what a confusion does this diversity of protectors occasion? On these occasions, the saints in question must combat together in Heaven, whilst those whom they side with are fighting upon the earth, and thus revive the disputes between Venus and Juno. In case they observe a neutrality, and leave this matter to the determination of chance, do they not deserve to be charged

† Quid si populi rursus duo hostilibus dissidentes armis sacrificiis paribus superiorum locupletaverint aras, alterque in alterum postulent vires sibique ad auxilium commendari, nonne iterum necesse est credi, si premiis sollicitantur, ut prosint, eos partes inter utrasque debere hæsitare, desigi, nec reperire quid faciant, cum suas intelligunt gratias sacrorum acceptionibus obligatas? Aut inde auxilia hinc & inde præstabunt; id quod fieri non posset, pugnabunt enim contra ipsos se ipsis contra suas gratias, voluntatesque nitentur: aut ambobus populis opem subministrare cessabunt, id quod sceleris magni est post impensam acceptamque mercedem. Arnobius contra Gentes, Lib. VII. pag. 219 & seq.

\* Sæpe præmente Deo, fert Deus alter opem.  
 Mulciber in Trojam, pro Troja stabat Apollo.  
 Æqua Venus Teucris, Pallas iniqua fuit.  
 Oderat Æneam propior Saturnia Turno:  
 Ille tamen Veneris Numine tutus erat,

Ovid. Trist. Libr. I. Eleg. 11.  
 with

with ingratitude, in the same manner as Arnobius accuses the false gods, viz. of meanly abandoning those who had offered up honours, and numberless oblations to them? May we not justly apply the following passage of the author in question to such a behaviour as this? *Opem administrare cessabunt, id quod sceleris magni est post acceptam mercedem \**?"

And indeed is there not some resemblance between the offerings which the Nazarenes devote to their saints, and those which the Greeks and Romans used to bestow on their Deities? Do they not present them with gold and silver vessels? Do they not dedicate churches to them? Do they not lavish their bounty on the priests appointed to chaunt forth their praises? Why then ought not these saints to be as grateful as the heathen Deities? The single chapel dedicated to St. Ignatius, in Rome, contains almost as valuable a treasure as the temple of Delphos. Must not this saint be basely ungrateful to abandon those to whom he owed that immense wealth? On the other hand, the Jansenists sacrifice their lives and estates, for the sake of St. Augustin's memory; they defend his writings, and maintain his glory. Is he less obliged to protect them; and, can he give them up to the fury of their adversaries, without infringing the laws of the soundest morality? What feuds and divisions must therefore prevail between the two saints in question, in Heaven, if we may form a judgment of this from the extreme hatred which is found here below among their followers? Must they not necessarily occasion great confusion in the celestial mansions, by the cabals they form in them? It is therefore my opinion, dear Isaac, that a heathen who should set about answering Arnobius, would have a fine opportunity, of excusing the division which arose among the gods at the siege of Troy;

\* Arnob. contra Gentes, Lib. VII. pag. 219.

that

that he would not fail to describe all the Nazarene saints at daggers drawing, and joining. as the whim might take them, either the Jansenists or the Molinists. He would draw St. Ignatius,

Arm'd with a Bull, and hasting to pope Clement,  
To sow the seeds of fury in his bosom \*.

Such Nazarenes as would deal candidly, must own that Arnobius's reproaches were not built on so solid a foundation as he imagined; and that his adversaries might have attacked him for that very circumstance upon which he pretended to insult them. The reproaches of this father will therefore be very weak, in case the worship of the saints, as now practised by several of the Nazarenes, is admitted. But, on the other hand, I should be apt to believe, from his erudition, his genius, and his eloquence, that, in the age he wrote, the custom was not yet introduced of offering up prayers to the dead, though they had been never so glorious, and acquired the highest veneration, in their life-time. If that be the case, as many of the Nazarenes in this age pretend, it is very certain that the objection against the heathens was of great weight, and that it was impossible for them to answer in any other tolerable manner, the objection made to them with regard to the feuds among the Deities; and their ingratitude, in case they refused to join in the quarrels of such as were extremely liberal towards them.

\* Aaron Monceca alludes to the following verses of Virgil.

Respice ad hæc, Adsum dirarum ab sede sororum:  
Bella manu, letumque gero. - - - -  
Sic effata facem juveni conjecit, et atro  
Lumine fumantes fixit sub pectore tædas.  
Olli somnum ingens rupit pavor; ossaque et artus  
Perfudit toto prorsus corpore fudor.  
Arma amens fremit: Arma toro testisque requirit.

Virgil. *Æneid.* Lib. VII. ver. 454.

Such

Such Nazarenes as reject the worship of the dead, ground their belief on writings of their first divines, who make no mention of any honours which ought to be paid them. It is natural to suppose, that had these honours been a fundamental point of religion, they would not have been entirely silent on this head; and that those who succeeded them in their functions, and spent their time in instructing the people, would not have insulted the heathens for a practice they themselves observed. Had they acted in this manner, they must necessarily have exposed themselves to the sharpest ridicule; and have met with the same treatment as many divines who write in this age, and to whom the very same things are objected as they level against their adversaries. The Molinists declare incessantly in their writings, that the Jansenists make a tyrant of the Deity; that they describe him as cruel, and fantastical; in short, with so odious a character, that it is impossible for such a Deity to endear himself to mankind. The latter, on the contrary, charge their adversaries with making the creature dispense with the love he owes his creator; and attack them with the very weapons with which they intended to wound them.

Another circumstance, my dear Isaac, that appears to me still more extraordinary, in religious disputes is, the opinions which the divines put into the mouths of their adversaries; and for which they inveigh bitterly against them, tho' the latter expressly deny their holding the opinions with which they are charged. The Jesuits complain that it is mere calumny, when they are reproached with asserting that it is no crime not to love the Deity. They condemn this doctrine in the strongest terms\*. Nevertheless their adversaries are for ever renewing the attack. The protestant Nazarenes consider those are execrable heretics who make

\* To be convinced of this, we need but read Bourdaloue's sermons.



God the author of sin; and their chief divine expresses himself in very clear terms on that head †. But notwithstanding this, his adversaries have declared a thousand times, that his opinions are of more pernicious consequence than those of Atheists. It is less criminal to deny the existence of God, than to make him author of sin. Who then is the most guilty, an Atheist or a Calvinist? They are both guilty; but I look upon the Atheist as least so. Here we have a decision that is greatly strained, and indeed it comes from a Jesuit, whose words are as follow. “*Amplius dico: Tolerabilius negare Deum, quam peccati autorem Deum asserere.— Quid ergo suadeo, Atheum potius quam Calvinistam esse? Neutrum quidem bonum: Hoc tamen deterius apparet\*.*”

It may be said, dear Isaac, that if a spirit of insincerity is always found to prevail in disputes, it is carried to the highest pitch by controversial writers,

Is it not high time, that the Rabbies, the Priests and the Musties, after having plagued the whole world during so many ages, should at last introduce a spirit of peace and tranquility among mankind?

† *Temulenti isti adeo fieri omnia perstreptentes, eum enim mali auctorem constituunt, deinde quasi immutetur mali natura, cum sub hoc nomine Dei velò tegitur, bonum esse affirmant: In quo atrocior & sceleratior contumelia Deum afficiunt, quam si Potestatem aut Justitiam ipsius alio transferrent. Cum enim Deo nihil magnis proprium sit quam bonitas, ipsum a se abnegari oporteret, & in diabolum transmutari, ut malum efficeret quod ei ab istis tribuitur. Et certe istorum Deus Idolum est, quod nobis execrabilius debet omnibus gentium Idolis. Calvini Instit. adversus Liberos* Cap. XIV. pag. 447.

Here follows the conclusion of this passage, in favour of those who do not understand Latin. “As God has not any quality more essential to him, than his goodness, he may cease to be, and transform himself into a Devil, was he the author of evil, as Freethinkers say; the God in whom they believe being a more execrable Idol than any of those of the Idolaters.”

\* Becanus, opuscul. Theolog. Tom. I. pag. 178.

Farewell

Farewell, dear Isaac; live content and happy; and be ever averse to a vain desire of disputing.

## LETTER CLX.

Jacob Brito asserts that the Christian slaves in Turkey are treated with less rigour than the Turkish slaves are in Europe; and charges the reports of the cruel treatment of the former on the artifice of the priests in France, &c. to excite the charity of the people. A quotation from a friar's voyage to Tripoly refuted.—Some political remarks on the Algerine state with respect to other nations.

JACOB BRITO TO AARON MONCECA.

Algiers—

THE stories, dear Monceca, which the Nazarenes relate concerning the treatment slaves meet with during their captivity, are sometimes very much exaggerated. They affirm, that the Turks inflict the most cruel punishments on the captives, and relate very surprizing particulars to this purpose; nevertheless, when strictly enquired into, they appear very different.

It is certain, however, that their captivity in general is rigorous; but then the Nazarenes do not meet with more severe treatment, than the Turkish slaves do from the European princes. In France, in Algerine is condemned to the galleys for life, as likewise in Spain and Italy. Can any punishment be more severe? The captives are punished in the same manner as malefactors, who often escape death, merely by their good fortune in hitting upon one of those auspicious moments, in which the pity of the judges prevails over the rigours of justice.

One part of the Nazarene slaves is employed in the public works. These draw stones out of the quarries,

quarries, and carry them to any place where they may be wanted. This doubtless must be a very laborious and painful occupation; and yet those engaged in it are less unhappy than the galley-slaves. At night they retire to a kind of barracks, but are not chained there; whereas the Turks are perpetually fastened to their seats in the galley, unless they happen to be ransomed, or to make their escape.

Such Nazarenes as are not employed in the public works, but belong to private persons, are a thousand times less unhappy than the Turkish slaves. They are pretty well fed; whereas the others have such aliment only as is given to slaves, viz. a pound of fat, of as exquisite a kind as that used in making of candles, and in which the beans allotted for twenty-five slaves are stewed.

I cannot conceive, dear Monceca, as the Nazarenes treat their captives with so much severity, how they can possibly inveigh so much against the usage which those of their religion meet with, who are slaves among the Turks. If there were orators among the Africans, who had the art of moving the passions, by pathetic speeches, I am persuaded they would make as pompous and affecting declarations, on the cruelty which their countrymen meet with, as those of the Nazarenes.

However, I do not condemn, dear Monceca, those writers, and particularly certain friars (obliged by the rules of their order, to redeem captives) who magnify a little in their relations, and enlarge on the evils of slavery. This is of use to enflame the charity of the Nazarenes, who, moved to compassion at the sad fate of their brethren, employ their utmost endeavours to free them from it. Few alms are more praise-worthy, more necessary, than such as are bestowed for freeing slaves from misery, to which they were reduced merely by the sport of fortune; their calamity not being the effect of their guilt. The public welfare heightens, on this occasion, the pity and

and charity of private persons: For if no regard is paid to those who endeavour to make arts flourish, and if they are not succoured in their misfortunes, it might be justly feared that multitudes would be intimidated, who otherwise might be tempted to brave the perils of the sea, if they were not restrained by a dread of meeting with the like sad fate. I had much rather, would a Spaniard say, be less wealthy, than run the hazard of losing my liberty, without any hopes of ever recovering it.

The custom of relieving slaves is of as ancient a date among the Nazarenes, as the establishment of their religion. Their first doctors, who were persons of a charitable disposition, and whose business was always to comfort persons in distress, appointed gatherings to be made, which were distributed for the benefit of such as were persecuted, banished, butchered, or burnt. The instant that those appointed to distribute the alms heard that any of their brethren were imprisoned, they immediately endeavoured to relieve them. They thought it was for the glory of the Nazarene name, to be affected with the calamities of those who enjoyed that name in common with them. So laudable a custom has been perpetuated among several nations of Europe. Among the French, the Italians, the Spaniards and Portuguese, are monks, who collect the monies bestowed for the redemption of captives, and employ it for that purpose. It would be scarce possible for them to embezzle a considerable part of the monies put into their hands, they being audited by some of the laity, who could never be prevailed upon to connive at such a fraud. Yet notwithstanding all the precautions used, some little embezzlements are made by the friars; but this they more than compensate, by the benefit produced by their sermons, which is wholly formed of an account of slaves who had been burnt, impaled, cut to pieces, &c. These monks destroy a much greater number, in a single period, than has



or will be killed, in every country where the Mahomedan religion is professed, to the end of the world. However these preachers sometimes give relations in which truth shines forth from a midst the clouds with which they darken it. Those who are desirous of distinguishing truth from falshood, and of knowing the true state of the cruelty exercised by the Turks, discover it on the occasions in question.

I observed, dear Monceca, that the condition of those Nazarenes, who are slaves to private persons, is much happier than that of such Turks as are in captivity among the Spaniards and French. A friar, who has given us a relation of his voyage to Tripoli, could not prevail with himself to magnify the sufferings of the slaves in question; and has thus described the liberty which the Turks permit them to enjoy. As for those slaves whom they employ in their gardens, their toils are far less grievous; but then they are deprived of all spiritual succours, many of them dying without receiving the sacraments. It is on this occasion that they suffer a persecution, which is much more dangerous in its consequences, though it does not appear so severe: For, as vice is there permitted to appear bare-faced; and all things conspire to enflame the most abominable passions, the Turks taking advantage of the little spiritual succours the Christians meet with there, oblige the females (who are but too prone to this of themselves) among them to employ all the seducing arts possible, to corrupt them; and if these Nazarene captives are so unhappy as to be drawn away, they then are under a necessity, either of turning Mahomedans or of perishing in the flames. These Barbarians frequently excite them to commit actions of the most shocking brutality; and do all that lies in their power, to reduce them to an infernal captivity, by the abominable crime that prevails so much among them. So that a Christian, in Tripoli, suffers

much from the vile blandishments of the infidels, as in other places, from the cruelty of the Barbarians\*.

It would be impossible for a more specious pretence to be hit upon, in order to give an odious air to the kindness of the Turkish patrons, than in supposing it directly repugnant to the Nazarene religion; and those who believe whatever they are told, without taking the pains to give it a due examination, look upon the condition of those slaves who belong to private persons, as more calamitous than that of such as appertain to the state. However nothing can be falser than the arts which it is said their women are commanded to employ, in order to prompt their slaves to change their religion. On the contrary, it is a great grief to them when any such thing happens, because they are obliged, at the expiration of a certain time, to give them their liberty: And the captives, so far from being reduced to the necessity, either of turning Mahomedans, or of perishing in the flames, when they are caught in an intrigue with any of the Turkish women, only receive an hundred blows on the soles of their feet. There indeed is a law, which prevails all over Barbary in general, that whenever a Nazarene is caught in an intrigue with a Turkish woman, the former will be impaled, and the latter drowned; but this law is never put in force, except with regard to such persons who, being in a state of freedom, are not able to raise a considerable sum to save their lives; for as to slaves, they seldom fall a sacrifice to it. This distinction is owing to a principle of self-interest among the Turks; few of them thinking it reasonable to sacrifice their slaves to the glory of Mahomed. As to the women, they are punished with great severity:

\* The state of the kingdoms of Barbary, Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers, containing the history both natural and political, of those countries; and the treatment which the slaves there meet with from the Turks; the manner of their being ransomed, &c. p. 76.

If their gallants will not turn Mahommedans, the women in question are drowned. Thou seest, dear Monceca, how little credit ought to be given to such relations as are wrote by persons whose interest it is to disguise the truth. However, as I before observed, this ought to be excused, whenever any considerable advantage is to result from it.

It is surprizing that the European princes, who have had so much reason to complain of the Corsairs of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli; who sometimes even chastised them with severity, though always to no purpose, should never have formed a resolution utterly to destroy them. This might have been easily done, and they thereby might have freed all the Mediterranean coast from a pest that has the most deadly effect upon trade. They ought to rely very little on the alliance into which they may enter with those Barbarians, because these, the instant it is their interest to infringe them, never fail to do it. Necessity even obliges them, in order to subsist themselves, to violate the articles of peace with some prince, whenever they cease hostilities with regard to another. If a harmony subsists between them and the French and English, they then are sure to plunder the Dutch and Spaniards; and if they afterwards join in amity with the Dutch, they then break off from the French. This is a circumstance which all Europe knows to be true; and, at the same time, concerns the interest of all the Nazarene princes. Nevertheless, they are so far from joining together against their common enemies, that they favour them, and furnish them with succours of every kind.

The politics if the Nazarene monarchs prove the strongest support of the Corsairs of Barbary. Whoever examines this matter thoroughly will find, that the interests of the several crowns are so different, that it will be impossible for them ever to unite, in order to destroy the Algerines, the Tunisians and Tripolitans. It is the interest of the English

English not to let the Spaniards, the French, or the Dutch, possess themselves of the ports of Barbary: For the moment they should be engaged in war with those nations, they could not cast anchor any where along the coasts of the Mediterranean, but would be excluded from all its ports.\* The English are so firmly persuaded, that it is against their interest for the Spaniards to be powerful in Barbary, that they would willingly have assisted the Turks in recovering Oran. For the same reason which will not allow the Spaniards to possess themselves of the ports of Barbary, the other powers will not be prompted to assist any crown that should attempt to seize upon them.

The interest of trade also prevents princes from uniting together against the Algerines. The greater obstacles the Spaniards and Dutch meet with in their navigation, the more advantage the British ships enjoy. I will suppose three vessels, belonging to the Spaniards, the French and the English, lying at Calés, and bound for Marseilles. Now if it depended upon myself, to put goods on board any of the three vessels I might think proper, I should be far from making choice of the Spanish ship; because I should have the Corsairs of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, the Turks and the Moors for my enemies. I should run much less hazard in shipping my goods on board the Frenchman, having no enemies to dread but the Sallee-rovers; nevertheless I should make choice of the English vessel, because I then should stand in fear of no-body.

It is so very considerable an advantage to be free from all apprehensions with regard to Corsairs, that there is no Spanish ship but would hoist the English or French flag, in case this was allowed. Those French consuls who are settled in the ports of Italy, reap great advantages by the permission they obtain from the French admiral, in favour of several merchants, who, to prevent evil accidents, trade under the French flag. If the ships of all other nations en-



joyed the same privileges, those of the nation in question would consequently be of no use.

Such, dear Monceca, is the odd fate of mankind. One party cannot raise itself but by pulling down the other. If they all entertained a just way of thinking, they doubtless would be sensible, that the duty most incumbent on them, is to sacrifice all views of sordid interest to the ease and tranquility of their brethren. But the politics of states, which is founded solely on the views of riches and grandeur, clashes with the sentiments dictated by humanity. An Englishman does not value if an hundred Spaniards are made slaves, provided his trade flourishes, and his vessel arrives safe in the harbour.

Enjoy thy health, dear Monceca; live contented and happy; and imprint deep in thy memory, that a philosopher ought never to be actuated by views of self-interest.

## LETTER CLXV.

The sciences not known in any part of Africa except Morocco.—The history of the misfortunes of Averroes, an excellent philosopher.—The ill-treatment the famous Arnauld met with from the malevolence and envy of some of his cotemporaries; as did also Melancthon, Abélard, and many other learned men.

JACOB BBITO, to AARON MONCECA.

Algiers.—

THE sciences, my dear Monceca, are entirely unknown in Algiers. The people there have not the least tincture of any thing relating to philosophy and polite literature. There are only a few pitiful astrologers in that country, who abuse the credulity of the people; and some ballad-makers

ers, whose songs are greatly inferior to those which blind people sing at the corners of streets in Paris.

The like ignorance prevails in all parts of Africa, the kingdom of Morocco excepted. In the capital of this empire is an university, of which the renowned Averroes was formerly professor. The university in question is composed of a great number of learned Arabians, who adhere strongly to the doctrine of Aristotle, whose works were translated into Arabic by Averroes.

The Moors were as great peripateticks anciently, as the friars: And, about the same time that Averroes brought the Arabians acquainted with this Greek philosopher, the French began to imbibe his opinions. Rigordus informs us in his history, that, in a council held at Paris, in 1209, the assembly sentenced to the flames some of Aristotle's works, which were explained in the schools; and which having been brought not long before from Constantinople, had been translated from the Greek into Latin\*.

The peripatetic system prevailed longer in Africa than it did in Europe; and it has now enjoyed a reign there of five hundred years. Happily for its glory, Morocco has not given birth to a Descartes or a Gassendi. In all probability, should any such arise up among them, they would find it as hard a task to make the Arabians sensible of the defects in the ancient philosophy, as the French to open the eyes of their countrymen. It is certain that they would be as grievously persecuted; the doctors among the Moors being as cholerick as the Nazarene divines; as bigotted to the opinions which have been instilled into them in their youth; and as ready to cry out a heretic, whenever any person happens to dissent from them.

Averroes involved himself in a series of troubles, for attempting to outstrip his brother-professors; and

\* Delati de novo a Constantinopoli, & e Græco in Latium translati. Rigordus, in Vita Philippi Augusti, apud Launoium de varia Aristotelis Fortuna, cap. i. p. 6.

it was not, till after he had suffered much greater calamities than those which obliged Descartes to leave his native country, that he at last found an opportunity of pursuing undisturbed his philosophical studies. The history of his misfortunes is so very curious; and gives so exact a description of the jealousy which prevails so much among the learned, what religion soever they may profess, that you will not be displeased to meet here with a short account of them, written by a very able writer.

“ Several of the nobility as well as doctors in Corduba, particularly Ibnu-Zoar the physician, envied Averroes; and resolved to impeach him, as entertaining heterodox principles. They suborned certain youths, who besought him to favour them with some lectures in philosophy. Averroes complied with their request, and discovered to them his opinions in philosophical matters; upon which they caused an instrument of this to be drawn up by a public officer, and impeached him as a heretic. The instrument in question was signed by an hundred witnesses, and sent to Manfor, king of Morocco. The prince having read it was enraged, and cried aloud; it is plain this man is not of our religion. He confiscated all his possessions, and sentenced him to confine himself in the district inhabited by the Jews. Averroes obeyed; but as, when he used to go sometimes to the mosque, to offer up his prayers, boys would often throw stones at him, he withdrew from Corduba to Fez, and there concealed himself. However, he was discovered a few days after; when being thrown into prison, his enemies asked Manfor what should be done with him? The monarch assembled several divines as well as lawyers, and bid them declare what punishment ought to be inflicted upon such a man? Most of them replied, that he ought to be put to death, as being an heretic; but some represented, that it would not be proper

to put to death a person of his eminence, who was chiefly known under the character of a lawyer and a divine; and therefore, continued they, it will not be reported among the people, that a heretic was condemned, but a lawyer and a divine. The consequence of this will be, 1. That the infidels will no longer be induced to come over to our religion, which must necessarily lessen the number of its professors. 2. A complaint will be made, that the African doctors seek out, and discover reasons for putting one another to death; it will therefore be more consonant to the dictates of justice, to oblige him to make a recantation before the gate of the chief mosque, where this question shall be put to him, whether he repents? It is humbly our opinions, that your majesty ought to pardon him, in case he gives tokens of repentance; for what man here below is entirely free from guilt? Mansor approved of this advice, and gave the necessary orders, to the governor of Fez, for putting it in execution. Pursuant thereunto, our philosopher, one Friday, at the hour of prayer, was led to the gate of the chief mosque; and being bare-headed, was set upon the highest step, when all who entered into the mosque spit in his face. Prayers being ended, the doctors attended by the notaries, and the judge with his assistants, came and asked the ill-fated philosopher, whether he repented of his heresy? He answered, that he did, upon which he was discharged. He continued in Fez, and there read lectures on the civil-law. Some time after this, Mansor giving him leave to return to Corduba, he went thither, but led a miserable life, having neither money nor books. In the mean time, the judge who succeeded him, discharged so ill the duties of his functions; and justice in general was so badly administered in this country, that the people found themselves cruelly oppressed, Mansor, being desirous of applying a remedy to this evil, assembled his council, and therein proposed to restore Averroes,



roes, to which overture the majority of the assembly agreed; whereupon an order was sent to him to return immediately to Morocco, to be there restored to his former employment. Averroes, upon this advice, set out that moment, with his whole family, for Morocco, and there spent the remainder of his days. He was buried in it, not far from the street of the leather-dressers; and his monument, with an inscription upon it, was there seen during a long course of years. I must not omit the answer he made to those who asked what frame of mind he entertained during the persecution he laboured under. I was both pleased and displeased, replied he, with this state. It was a great pleasure to me to be discharged from the laborious toils to which those men must submit who would acquit themselves justly of the duties of the employment I filled; but it vexed me not a little, to see myself oppressed by false witnesses. I did not wish, added he, to be restored to my post; and did not re-assume the functions of it, till my innocence had been cleared \*".

The first time, dear Monceca, that I read this relation of the sad calamities in which Averroes was involved, I called to mind those which so great a number of the learned suffered, with as little shadow of justice as this famous Arabian. When I reflected on the disgraceful posture in which he was set at the gate of the mosque, I figured to myself Arnould or Paschal, seated on the steps in the Jesuit's college, and there submitting to the insults of every member of the society. If the Jesuits had found as easy an opportunity, in Paris, of satiating their vengeance as the Corduban doctors, there is no doubt but that the anchorites of Port-royal would have been sentenced to perform some penance, perhaps more cruel than that of the Mahomedans just mentioned.

• Bayle's Dict. Rem. [M] of the article Averroes.

No hatred is so dangerous as that which springs from the feuds and dissensions of learned men, and of divines especially; and there is no sort of excess to which the last mentioned will not give into, when not restrained by a superior power. They set every engine at work to ruin their adversaries; and employ, without the least scruple, calumny, falsehood, and the blackest frauds, to compass their ends. Though the famous Arnauld's enemies could not enjoy the pleasure of forcing him to submit to the Stigma inflicted on Averroes, they endeavoured to destroy his reputation by defamatory libels; and what a flood of absurd calumnies were vented on that occasion? According to them, that illustrious man was a wizard, and in great favour at the court of Beelzebub, whom he used to address, every now and then, in the most eloquent speeches. "It is certain, says an author\*, that Mr. de Maupas, bishop of Evreux, affirmed to many persons, that he had been informed by a convert from witchcraft, that he had often seen Mr. Arnauld at their diabolical, nocturnal meetings, with a princess of the blood; and that Mr. Arnauld there made a very beautiful speech to the Devil". Some other of this divine's enemies published†, that he had declared himself head of the Waldenses, and was become the mighty protector of that people‡. They transformed this divine into

\* The author of the IVth case of Jansenius's relations, page 2.

† See Questions Curieuses, pag. 4.

‡ Nos infra inscripti superiores conventuales regularium in civitate Leodiensi, certiorati de conventiculis quæ habentur apud certum Arnoldum doctrinam suspectam spargentem, censuimus D. Vicarium charitative certiorandum, ut similia conventicula dissipare, & prohibere non dedignetur, etiam cum dicto Arnolde conversationes. Datum in conventu minorum hac 25 Augusti 1600; ad quem effectum commisimus R. P. M. Ludovicum Lamet Priorem Dominicanorum, ad nomen nostrum accedendum D. Vicarium, & exponendum intentionem nostram. Questions Curieuse, page 228.---Heavens! what Latin have we here! It is indeed worthy the enemies of that learned man.

the general of an army; and this at a time when they were sensible that their calumnies would be entirely defeated. They did not value though afterwards a discovery was made of their frauds, if they did but prevail during some time.

Six friers of Liege did all that lay in their power, to cause this renowned divine to meet with the same cruel treatment which Averroes had met with in Morocco. The father guardiane of the Recollets and of the Franciscans, the priors of the Austin friers and of the Dominicans, and the vicar of the Carmelites, with the rector of the Jesuits at their head, behaved in the same manner as the doctors of Corduba, animated by Ibnu the physician. These friers drew up a petition, in which they required to have one Arnould excluded from all civil society, for entertaining opinions pernicious to it. O tempora! O mores! Dear Monceca, is it not shocking that six despicable friers should be so amazingly insolent, as to presume to speak of one of the most learned men in the world, as though they were talking of some vagrant, or of one resembling themselves? With what indignation will posterity one day hear, that this illustrious divine was pointed at by the name of one Arnould? If any circumstance can lessen the surprize, it will be their reflecting, that so great a number of illustrious persons have been persecuted by adversaries equally ignorant and hot-headed.

To pass over the misfortunes with which several literati, in the present age have been oppressed, if we trace this matter still higher, it will appear that merit has always been abnoxious to the attacks of envy. Men of letters do not commonly meet with the greatest enemies among persons who profess a different religion from themselves, but among those of their own persuasion. Mr. Claude never attempted to attack Mr. Arnould's morals; this being done by none but a herd of scribblers among the Molinists; if we except one Protestant minister, whose fraudulent writings were disowned

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disowned even by his brethren\*. Melanchthon met with more cruel adversaries among the Lutherans than among the Papists themselves. His calm and peaceful disposition, drew upon him the hatred of all the rigorists; and became so grievous to him, that he considered death as a blessing, as that only could secure him from envy. We are told by the author of his life, that the jealousy of his enemies rose to so high a pitch, and that they took such uncommon pains to ruin him, that he expected every week to be turned out of his professorship which he yet enjoyed forty years†.

Melanchthon's unhappy destiny puts me in mind of that of Abelard, one of the most illustrious revivers of the sciences, and who was contemporary with Averroes. How grievous were the misfortunes and calamities he laboured under, occasioned by the machinations of the priests, both secular and regular! They forced him, without permitting him to say a word in his own defence, to commit publicly his books, with his own hands, to the flames. The hatred of some authors pursued this great man several years after his death. They charged him with continuing a shameful correspondence with Heloise, after the dreadful adventure which prevented his having an opportunity to indulge himself in it, and they affirmed that he had tasted as great delight in the mere shadow of pleasure, as in the pleasure itself‡.

\* L'Esprit de Mr. Arnauld, compose par Mr. Jurieu.

† Publice non dubitavit affirmare: Ego jam sum hic, Dei beneficio, quadraginta annos; & nunquam potui dicere, aut certus esse, me per unam septimanam mansurum esse. Camerarius in Vita Melancht. pag. 206.

‡ Ex quibus omnibus liquet quam frigida fuerit Petri Abelardi Apologia, cum redargutus de nimia familiaritate cumamica quidem sua Heloisa, & aliis monialibus Paraclitenfibus, reposituit Eunuchos, qualis ipse factus erat, tuto absque omni periculo posse versari cum sceminis. Theoph. Raynaud, Eucharis, pag. 148.



How violent, dear Monceca, must the hatred be which arises from the literati, since they do not revere even the ashes of the dead; and cruelly attack heroes who, being dead, are consequently denied the opportunity of defending themselves.

In how many new libels do malevolent writers daily asperse the memory of Claude, Arnauld, Bayle, Montaigne, Abarbanel, Maimonides, Luther, Calvin, St. Austin, St. Jerom, and many other illustrious personages, of all religions? but surely, would it not be possible for such writers to censure whatever they find amiss in their writings, and at the same time, do justice to their persons and their works? Though I am a Jew, dear Monceca, I yet shall be far from asserting, that St. Austin was a mere scribler, Arnauld an ignorant creature, Luther, a blockhead; Calvin, a man of no capacity, and Bourdaloue, a writer who infected mankind with the most pernicious morality: And indeed I should blush was prejudice to carry me to such violent lengths. I certainly entertain opinions different from most of the Jansenist or Molinist doctors, but then I do justice to the eloquent and persuasive manner in which they maintain their doctrines; and so far from aspersing them, I behave in the same manner as a judge with regard to a pleader, whose cause he may condemn, tho' he admires the genius and learning employed by him in defending it.

Take care of thy health, dear Monceca, live contented and happy; and show a perfect impartiality towards mankind in general.

LETTER

## L E T T E R. CLXVI.

A description of the city of Tunis.—Reflections on the ruins of Carthage, and other antient cities.—Some political observations on certain historical facts.—The government of Tunis described.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Tunis——

**I**T is now two days, dear Monceca, since I arrived in Tunis, a city built about nine miles from the ruins of Carthage. It does not stand on the sea-shore, a circumstance that has secured it from being bombarded; and the attacks which Algiers and Tripoli have suffered from the English and French. Such vessels as go to Tunis, cast anchor in a spacious road, defended by the forts of Gouletta, which are very ill fortified; and built at the mouth of a small canal, which forms a communication between the sea and a lake, an hundred paces from which stands the city of Tunis. Its situation is far less agreeable than that of Carthage, which was built on a neck of land that stretches into the sea, and forms a cape that still bears the name of that ancient commonwealth. I myself have visited the ruins of it. Among an amazing heap of stones we meet with several subterraneous places. The most entire of this kind we see is a reservoir composed of sixteen or seventeen cisterns, filled with water for the service of the public. These cisterns are joined together by a common arch, which also covers two galleries on the sides of these wide subterraneous places; and which, such who went to draw water, used to walk upon. Some thousand paces from the ruins of the city stand several very beautiful aqueducts, of a considerable length, and which anciently reached to the publick cisterns. There, dear Monceca, stands all that now

remains of haughty Carthage, once the rival to Rome. Some years hence it will be scarce possible to discover the place where it stood, if the modern geographers do not take care to point it out, for the use of posterity.

We have but a very faint idea of those cities that once were the most renown'd: What we know concerning them is so confused, and intermix'd with so many fabulous particulars, that it is impossible, in the midst of this chaos and confusion, to discover the truth. Ancient Babylon is known to us only by the relation of some old writers, who do not clear up half our doubts; and not the least footsteps are now remaining of that once so renowned city.

We are quite ignorant of the manner of building used by mankind, (the Egyptians excepted) in the infancy of the world. We must go back to the Greeks and Romans to discover the cement used for those materials employed in the building of public edifices. The ancient Persians, Ethiopians, &c. used to build without cement, mortar, &c. and merely by fixing together stones that were perfectly joined, as appears from several of their edifices\*. We are altogether in the dark as to that particular, and shall never be able to gratify our curiosity in this respect, as the accounts now remaining of these things are very obscure, and consequently give little satisfaction to such persons as desire to have a clear knowledge of matters. Besides, the lights we may gather from the ruins that now exist are sometimes fallacious, time having pulverized certain parts of the stone; and we possibly may consider as mortar the sand seen in the several places where the stones join. In fine, tho' certain edifices may have been built with a substance fit to join the stones together, we yet are utterly in the dark with regard to the manner of composing this cement, and a thousand fabulous particulars are related on that head.

\* The Arenæ at Nimes are built in that Manner.

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Another difficulty that occurs in the discoveries attempted to be made, by the ruins found in the fields, where ancient cities of renown formerly stood, is, the strong probability we have to believe that all the ruins in question are of a later date than the manner of building which the curious are in search of. The principal cities of antiquity were destroyed several times, and most of them rebuilt under the Romans. The ruins now seen of ancient Troy are not the remains of the palace of Hector and Priam. Those princes were not powerful enough to build edifices which contained so vast a number of marble columns as are now found in the fields of Troy. To be persuaded of this truth, we need but read Homer's Iliad; for tho' a poet always magnifies objects, the instant we cast our eyes on the prodigious remains of the marble now scattered up and down the fields of Troy, and the amazing numbers that have been carried away from it, we are immediately persuaded, that the ruins of the famous Ilium are not those which exist in this age.

It is certain that the Romans, who either imagined, or were extremely desirous of having it believed, that they sprung from the Trojans, rebuilt the city of Troy. Augustus caused a great many magnificent edifices to be raised there, on the ruins of the old city. They there built a new Ilium, which has long since, by the injury of time, fallen again to ruin; and if we now meet with ancient monuments there, these ought to be ascribed to the Romans, rather than to the ancient Trojans. Perhaps, dear Monceca, the same observation ought to be extended to the ruins of Carthage; and the monuments which are there seen in this age, were possibly not built by the Romans, till after they had possessed themselves of Africa.

The calamitous fate which so many proud cities have met with, part whereof have been destroyed by the Mahommedans, makes me frequently reflect on the prejudice they did to the polite arts and sciences. How great a number of edifices were



demolished by them, and how many ancient statues broke to pieces; to how desolate a condition did they reduce all Greece, which contained a greater quantity of valuable monuments than all the rest of the world? How could the Nazarene princes leave that country a prey to the cruelty and fury of these Barbarians!

Had the Turks made their incursions into Greece, at the same time when the Goths, the Huns and the Vandals sacked Rome; and made as bad havock in the West as the Mahommedans did in the East, I should not have wonder'd had the European monarchs abandon'd Constantinople to Mahommed II. But that this barbarous prince should invade the Eastern empire in the fifteenth century; that after possessing himself of the city of Constantinople, he should be upon the point of marching to Rome, in order to lay waste and destroy the only monuments which had escaped the fury of ignorance; this is what I can never reflect upon, without bewailing the blindness of the Nazarenes, who, being at that time disunited, exerted their utmost endeavours in order to pull one another to pieces.

It is certain, dear Monceca, that if, instead of the chimerical projects of the Crusaders, the European princes had contented themselves with driving the Turks entirely out of Europe, they would have easily succeeded on that occasion. This ought to have been their sole object; for, to attempt to pursue them in Asia, or to found a kingdom among them in the midst of Africa, is a project equally ridiculous and extravagant, and impossible to be put in execution. All these attempts have never served, nor will ever serve, to any other purpose but to prove the destruction of a great number of Nazarenes, by the fatigue of their marches, and the inclemency of the climate, which is productive of contagious distempers.

This naturally puts me in mind, dear Monceca, of the storm that is ready to break over the heads of the Mahommedans. If the famous alliance that is talked of should take place, and the ene-

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peror, the Venetians, the Poles, and Muscovites should unite together, the Turks will be in greater danger than ever; and should the Nazarene princes continue in peace two campaigns longer, the Ottoman power must necessarily have such a defeat as it will be impossible for it ever to recover. In the last war which the Turks had with the empire, that single crown dispossessed them of the two strongest holds upon their frontiers, and reduced them to the necessity of making an ignominious peace. What will become of them, as they now are obliged to defend themselves against the Muscovites, who will make a powerful diversion, as well as against the Poles, whom they have as much reason to dread? It may be affirmed, dear Monceca, that should the Ottoman empire get clear of this war without sustaining a considerable loss, nothing will be able to shake its power. But this will scarce be possible; and I do not doubt but that, before this year is ended, such an event will be seen, as may be worthy of being transmitted to latest posterity.

I confess to thee, dear Monceca, that tho' it ought to be altogether indifferent to me, whether I depend on the Nazarenes or Turks, I yet cannot forbear being greatly interested in favour of the former, for the sake of the arts and sciences. Every strong-hold that is won by the Imperialists, every battle they gain, is a victory gained over ignorance. I consider the Germans as the missionaries of reason and philosophy. What a triumph would it be for learning, in case a bookseller, some years hence, should offer to sale, in the Hippodrome, the works of Leibnitz, and of Sir Isaac Newton; and that Des Cartes and Gassendi should appear in places, where nothing was seen to triumph but the writings of some wretched Turkish divines! Dear Monceca, so propitious a circumstance as this may one day be brought about; it depending entirely on the unity of some Nazarene powers. Must politics be always the ruin of mankind! I am of opinion, dear Monceca, that the same interests which secure certain petty princes of their dominions pre-

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vent the ruin of the Mahommedans. Great monarchs are not very well pleased to see a conqueror aggrandize himself, and become more formidable. Many powers would not be willing to have the Turkish empire in Europe totally destroyed, as this would not suit their interest. The love they bear to religion is not considerable enough to outweigh political reasons. Roman pontiffs have been seen to unite with those very Turks against whom Rome had so often preached Crusades; but politicks change with the times; or new seasons occasion different cares, which is the motto of all the princes in question. To return to Tunis.

In this city, as in Algiers, there is a dey; but he is without authority, and the real sovereign is the bey. Formerly the last mentioned was only a commander of the militia; but during the various revolutions which happened in this kingdom, the beys seized upon the supreme authority; and they now appoint the dey: And it is also in their power to depose, in the most absolute manner, and whenever they think proper, those whom they have raised to that dignity.

The Moors, or ancient inhabitants of the country, are far less unhappy in this country than in Algiers. The beys behave with great kindness towards them, in order to secure themselves against the restless spirit of the Turks; and by this means they have introduced a kind of equilibrium, which keeps the country at peace. The last bey, who died a few years since, had gained very great advantages by the regard he shewed to the Moors. He would fain have freed them entirely from their subjection to the Turks; but was afraid of attempting to execute so difficult an enterprize, which might have been attended with the most fatal consequences.

A very remarkable circumstance in this prince is, that he had scarce any buttocks; at least that he had next to none; those he had once having been cut off, to prevent the ill consequences of a very severe

were bastinado, which he had received on his posteriors, when he was but an officer under the bey. Two hundred strokes had been given him; and these had been laid on so very stoutly, that the surgeons were forced to cut off his buttocks, to prevent a mortification. This rigorous punishment was of the happiest consequence afterwards; for, upon his accession to the throne, he was sensible, by the affliction it gave him to be reduced to so unhappy a condition, how useful buttocks are to mankind. This prompted him to abolish a punishment by which he had been so ill-fated as to lose his own; so that, during the twenty years that he reigned in Tunis, every one's posteriors were secured from the least insult. His successor, insensible to an infirmity which he himself never laboured under, had not the like compassion; by which means the custom is revived of giving the bastinado upon the posteriors, though the soles of the feet are usually punished on these occasions. Do not imagine, dear Monceca, that what I here tell thee is a fiction; nothing is truer; and it is no extraordinary thing for a punishment to be disused, when abhorred by the sovereign,

Enjoy thy health, dear Monceca; live contented and happy, and may prosperity attend upon all thy affairs.

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## LETTER CLXVII.

A description of a pyramid in the island of Gerbe, which the Turks take great satisfaction in; and why.—Character of the Jesuits in China.—Some observations with regard to the city of Tripoli; its government, &c. The people much addicted to theft; which is but slightly punished.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Tripoli.—

IN sailing from Tunis, dear Monceca, to Tripoli, I was forced, by the winds, to put in for some days to the island of Gerbe. Near the castle of this



this island I saw a monument of the cruelty and fury of mankind. It is a pyramid, thirty foot high, and upwards of an hundred and thirty round; and serves as the sepulchre of such Nazarenes as were butchered by the soldiers of Orcan, who won this country from the Nazarenes. This pyramid is formed of free-stone half way; but the remainder is made of nothing but the bones and skulls of men, piled one upon the other. The Turks take a haughty satisfaction in beholding this monument of hatred and barbarity. They declare, that as the triumphs which they have gained over the Nazarenes, are so many evident testimonies of the superiority of their religion, which God has visibly favoured in all ages, it is their duty to eternize the remembrance of it. The success of arms is one of the strongest arguments which the Mahomedans employ, to prove the truth and purity of their tenets. "Since God, say they, is the author of all propitious events, and that nothing comes to pass but as he is pleased to give liberty for it, is it not manifest that he approves of the zeal we burn with, to carry his religion into all countries? And are not the blessings he indulges us, and the victories we have obtained by his succour, over so great a number of Nazarene nations, an infallible proof that the Koran came from Heaven?"

This false prejudice imbibed by the Turks, makes them behold the Jews with a most contemptuous eye. They reproach us with being visibly abandoned by Heaven, as having no fixed abode upon the earth, and having no monarch of our own nation to govern and defend us. Nothing can be so ridiculous, dear Monceca, as that pretended proof of the truth of the Koran. If the extent of a religion, and the triumphs it has gained, were proofs of its excellency, the Turks would be forced to confess, that when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, the Deity beheld Paganism with a favourable eye. But it was monstrously absurd to assert such an opinion; and every religion that can ascribe

ascribe the progress it has made only to oppressions and murders, is rather an infernal enthusiasm than a celestial doctrine.

The methods proper for infusing instruction into mankind are so natural, that those persons must entertain very pernicious opinions, who would endeavour to persuade them from motives of fear. No task is easier, than that of bringing back the most erroneous minds to sensible truths, when easy and gentle methods are employed; when this is done without the least views of self-interest; and when such expedients are made use of to point out their prejudices to them, as plainly shew that the instructor is prompted by no other motives than those of candor and philosophical sincerity.

I do not make one moment's doubt of it, dear Monceca, but that if the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitors were not blinded by avarice and ambition, the Jews would soon be able to make them confess, that it is not only repugnant to the dictates of humanity, but also contrary to the will of the Creator, for them to imprison, torment and burn a set of ill-fated creatures, whose only crime is their continuing in the belief of opinions which they looked upon as true, and had been imbibed by them from their most tender infancy. Is it not shocking, dear Monceca, that they should put to death a man who never hurt any of his fellow citizens, or did the least prejudice to society? May it not be justly affirmed, that this is following the example of the Turks, and employing expedients of every kind to propagate a religion?

If we may credit a Nazarene author, the inquisitors are prompted by political reasons to act in the same manner as the Mahommedans. As they have corrupted the Nazarene doctrine by the fables introduced by them into it, they are reduced to the necessity of employing as many stratagems and artifices to establish them, as to inculcate a belief of the Koran. It is certain that the doctrine which is preached by certain Nazarenes, in the most remote countries,

countries, is so very absurd, that the meanest persons, who have but a just idea of the unity of God, must be shocked at it; and none but ignorant heathens could be made to swallow it down.

For these many years, a considerable number of popish divines continue to inveigh, in the strongest terms, against the Jesuits settled in China. They reproached them with making an odd mixture of the Nazarene and Heathen systems of belief; and with making the nations whom they were sent to instruct acquainted only with the exterior, and the superficialities, as it were, of the religion. The protestant divines go still greater lengths in their invectives. These, possibly, may be exaggerated; for the hatred they bear to the other sectaries raises a mist before their eyes, and frequently magnifies the several objects.

Be this as it will, here follows a passage from a man of prodigious learning, who was a great enemy to the Jesuits\*. “The Jesuits, says he, are not pleased with tradition, such as it appears; it destroying their loose morality, and overthrowing the doctrines of the Romish church; such in particular as those superstitious fathers attempt most zealously to establish; and, to propagate which, they travel to the most far distant countries.” The following passage may serve to give an idea of their religion. It is extracted from the History of a Christian Chineze Lady, whose director father Couplet the Jesuit had been. “Saint Ignatius, says he, St. Francis Xavier, St. Candida, whose name she bore, St. Monica, St. Ursula, and her companions, were the most tender objects of her piety. Her faith was so lively with regard to the efficaciousness of holy-water, and the ashes of consecrated palms, that she used to consider them as universal specifics for the healing diseases of every kind. Is not this a very judicious and well grounded faith and piety! and it is St. Ignatius, St. Ursula, holy-water, and the Agnus Dei, which prompt all the Je-

\* La Croze, Dissertations historiques sur divers sujets, Tome I. page 240.

suits to cross the seas, and make them undertake such hazardous voyages, to substitute a new system of heathen principles in the room of that which has prevailed, from the most remote times, among the Chinese."

These reproaches, dear Monceca, against the missionaries of China are exceedingly strong. I know not whether there be any just grounds for them; but this I will presume to say, that if they are, mankind are much more obliged to the Mahomedans than to the Jesuits; since the former inculcate, at least, a religion, which admits of no other worship but that of the Deity; and that the latter substitute new heathen errors, in the room of those imbibed by the nations whom they pretend to instruct. This opinion of mine ought to be thought by the Nazarenes, of what sect soever, the less extraordinary, as one of the greatest philosophers of these later times did not scruple to assert, that we are obliged to the Turks for making a great number of idolaters acquainted with the Deity. "The Mahomedan system, says he, is a kind of deism, joined to the belief of some incidents, and the observation of some ceremonies, which Mahomed and his followers added, sometimes very improperly to the religion of nature, which yet pleased certain nations. We owe to the Mahomedans, in many parts of the world, the destruction of the heathen belief; and it would prove one step towards leading mankind to a more sublime religion, was it preached in a proper manner; and if the ill-grounded prejudices of the Mahomedans did not prove a great obstacle to it \*"

I am certain that all such as shall examine this philosopher's opinion without prejudice, will confess, that if the Jesuits really preach, in China, such a morality, and such doctrines, as are ascribed to them, it would be better, in order to extirpate the heathen system, that twenty dervises should set out from Constantinople, than an hundred Jesuits from Rome and Paris. But I will own to thee, dear

\* Lettre de Mr. Leibnitz a Mr. la Croze, Ibid. pag. 164.



Monceca, it is my opinion, that the enemies of the Jesuits exaggerate matters greatly; and that, in the account those enemies have given of the motley religion composed of that of the Nazarenes and Christians, which the Jesuits endeavour to establish in India, a great number of falsities are inserted; though it is impossible but there must be some truth, to give a foundation for the complaints daily made in so many books, viz. of the servile regard which the Jesuits pay to certain parts of the Chineze worship.

Now I am speaking of the many reproaches which are levelled against those fathers, I must observe to thee, friend Monceca that I saw in a desert Island called Lampedussa, a poor hermit, who has compassed what the whole society of the Jesuits could never effect. This island was depopulated by Barbarossa, who made all the inhabitants of it slaves, and carried them to Tripoli; so that it is now inhabited by not one human creature, except the hermit in question. He officiates in a Nazarene chapel; and does the same in a little mosque, in which stands the sepulchre of one of the cherifs. Although this hermit be a Papist, he nevertheless is equally careful of the Nazarene and Mahomedan churches, and thus unites the two benefices. Such Turks and Christians as put in for water, at the island in question, leave him the several things he may stand in need of. No person has yet obliged him to declare, to which of these two chapels he is the most devoutly attached; hitherto, no Jansenist divine has taken it into his head to write against him, in order to prove, that he ought not to sweep, with the same broom, the cherif's mosque, and the chapel of our Lady of Good-voyage. Had I not therefore reason to say, good Monceca, that he has accomplished more than the whole society of the Jesuits had yet been able to perform? But I have spoken enough of the Jesuits.

I return

I return to my observations with regard to Tripoli, whither I have been arrived a week. This city is far less considerable than Algiers and not comparable to Tunis. The government is the same with that of the rest of the maritime cities of Africa. The Moors are in as little credit here as at Algiers. The Nazarene renegadoes enjoy the greatest share of the authority of any sect of people in this country; and fill the chief employments; and indeed there is a vast number of renegadoes here, and I have conversed with many of them. They all appeared to be as ignorant of the religion they had embraced, as of that quitted by them. Most of the persons in question had been so poorly educated, that they were scarce acquainted with the rudiments of their belief; and indeed, they assign the most trifling reasons possible for quitting their religion. Whereas, in other countries, slaves are commonly prompted, from the ill treatment they meet with from their patrons, to turn Mahommedans; they here, on the contrary, are brought over by gentleness. Of all the corsairs of Barbary none are less cruel, though none are so much addicted to theft, as the people of Tripoli. This crime is tolerated in their city. A child is not punished who steals any thing artfully in the streets; and the only thing allowed the person upon whom an attempt of this kind has been made, in case he catches the young knave in the fact, is to drub him a little, in order that he may learn to be more dextrous another time. Most foreigners who, being unacquainted with their dexterity, walk half an hour in the streets of Tripoli, miss their handkerchiefs at their return home. This blind toleration of theft met with partizans among those who are slaves to the chimerical ideas of some ancient legislators. Were these people of Tripoli acquainted with the history of ancient Greece, I do not doubt but they would be delighted to find, that Lycurgus had made, in Sparta, a direct law of what they are contented

merely to tolerate and dissemble. And indeed what would a corsair, who should read the following passage from Plutarch, say ? “ Among the young Spartans, the tallest and most robust used to carry the logs of wood designed for making the fire to dress supper ; whilst those of the least stature, and the weakest, used to carry herbs, which they stole out of the gardens and dining-rooms, whither they always crept as artfully as possible ; and, whenever they were caught, they were whipp’d, as not having looked out sharp enough ; or done their business in a bungling manner. They likewise used to steal all the victuals they could lay their hands on ; and never failed to grasp very artfully at any opportunity, when the persons, who ought to have looked after them, were either asleep, or negligent. In case of their being discovered, they were not only scourged, but also kept from victuals ; and when this was afterwards allowed them, it was in a very sparing manner ; in order that the necessity they should be reduced to of providing for themselves, might make them bolder and more artful \*.”

Was not this a most excellent school for youth ? Had Cartouche established laws of discipline for young thieves, must they not have resembled those of Lycurgus ? How much ought mankind to blush, at the errors and follies of those on whom they often bestowed the title of wise ! Most of those who had acquired the reputation of having exalted genius’s, and looked upon themselves as qualified to lay down rules for the conduct of their fellow creatures, would have deserved, had justice been done them, to be confined in mad-houses.

I do not hint barely at those fools, in whom the Heathens reposed a blind confidence ; but likewise at those who, during some centuries, have introduced, among the Nazarenes, such a multitude of ridiculous customs which superstition has rendered

\* Vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque, traduits par Dacier, Tom. I. pag. 249.

sacred. Is it not equally stupid to confine, in a numberless multitude of houses, crouds of indolent wretches who are of no service to a country; and to exercise them in kissing the ground, in scourging, and letting themselves be over-grown with filth, as to bring up boys in the art of thieving with dexterity? What a delightful parallel might be made between Lycurgus and Francis d'Assise? It is certain, however, that the Greek would appear to greater advantage than the Italian; because, among the laws enjoined by him some are excellent, and outweigh the bad ones; whereas the patriarch of the Franciscans only made it his endeavour to shew the heights of frenzy to which the human mind will sometimes proceed.

Cicero, worthy Monceca, used to say anciently; that he could not think how it was possible for two augurs to meet, and look at one another, without laughing. I must confess, that it is still more strange to me, how two cardinals, or two Roman pontiffs, if they reflect on the numberless multitude of idle, dissolute wretches subordinate to them, can keep a grave countenance. Should a philosopher be asked, which is the most ridiculous to believe, either that the Deity declares his will by the flight of birds; or is desirous of being honoured by scourgings, fantastical habits, idleness, avarice, ignorance, and debauchery? I am persuaded such a person would say, that it is less absurd to give credit to the vain practices of the augurs than to the efficacy of the monastic ceremonies.

Preserve thy health, dear Monceca; live contented and happy; and be not so long silent for the future.



## L E T T E R CLXVIII.

Concerning the revolutions which have happened in different kingdoms, occasioned by civil wars and domestic dissensions.—Some instances from English and French history.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

London——

**T**H Y letters, dear Brito, are equally instructive and entertaining; and I was utterly unacquainted with a great number of particulars relating to the manners of the Africans. I wish that the things I communicate to thee may please as much as those which thou informest me of.

I was not surprized at the frequent revolutions thou relatest, and which commonly prove the ruin of the African princes. They happen in nations that are much more polished and civilized than the kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis. With how many storms, for upwards of these two hundred years, has England been buffeted? In how many calamities was France involved, from the reign of Henry II. to that of Lewis XIV? Were not two monarchs assassinated, in that kingdom, one after another; and did not the French perpetrate the same crimes as the Algerines? The English went still farther, they aggravating guilt and parricide with contempt, executing their king publickly on a scaffold.

This horrid tragedy was perpetrated by men born among the dregs of the people. The sixteen, who were at the head of this faction, were a set of mean wretches, who, in times of peace, would not have dared to look a common magistrate in the face; and were Oliver now living, he would think himself happy in being the lowest member of the house of commons.

It is opportunity, and the different situation of things, that determine with regard to the peace of governments, and the authority of kings. The

most

most trifling circumstance may, in a season of the utmost tranquility, give rise to a violent sedition. At other times, the attempts of the best concerted cabals are defeated; and the machinations against the authority of sovereigns only make it more despotic and formidable.

Civil wars and dissensions break out at a time when they are least expected; and cease when they are thought to be in the midst of their career. Had any person declared, in a prophetic way, during the reign of Henry II. that France was going to be involved in the most fatal troubles; that it would perpetrate the most horrid crimes; would assassinate its kings; that the majority of its nobles, conspiring with the priests and friars, would drive the royal family from the throne, to bestow it on a foreign house: Had any person, I say, ventured to make such a prophetic declaration, they would have looked upon him as a madman, whose mind was a prey to the blackest frenzy. But on the other hand, if a little after the murder of Henry III. when all things seemed to conspire to the total ruin of France, another person had declared, that the royal family would be seated more firmly than ever upon the throne; and that the Spaniards, who governed and conducted the Parisians, would soon tremble in Madrid, at seeing the thunder ready to crush them; this second prophet would have been considered as a Sybarite, intoxicated with the pleasing ideas of his deluded imagination. He would not have been believed any more than the pretended enthusiast above hinted at, who foretold such fatal catastrophes, as there was scarce any probability of their ever coming to pass. But the event has shewn, that people would have been in the wrong, had they not given credit to the different predictions of these two prophets.

The sudden and unexpected events, which happened in the past ages, ought to shew the possibility of such as may happen hereafter. There is no country in Europe, how calm and undisturbed forever

ever it may be now, but, fifty years hence, may be involved in as many troubles, and those as frequent as the feuds which bring about so many revolutions in the African kingdoms. Whenever I am informed, that some unexpected sedition is broke out in a country, this does not give me the least surprize. On the contrary, I reflect that such as appear to enjoy the utmost tranquility, are perhaps upon the point of being obnoxious to the same sad fate.

In all countries the seeds of the passions, in the human mind, are the same; and the only art is, to know how to make them take root, and sprout forth; for this being done, the wished for fruit may be expected from them. A Frenchman or a German would go as violent lengths as an Algerine if excited by things that make a strong impression upon their minds. The Africans rise up in rebellion against their princes, from a supposition that they are bad governors; act contrary to the laws; and endeavour to enrich themselves at the expence of their subjects, &c. Now the Europeans take up arms against their sovereigns, when they are strongly persuaded that these are actuated by the same tyrannical motives. This is the common pretence, with the addition of that of religion, which rebels have made a handle of in all ages. The enemies of Henry III. and those of Charles I. and James II. had no other. And such rebels as shall hereafter take up arms against their princes, will employ the same; they being the most specious, and consequently the most capable of making an impression upon the minds of the people.

The Europeans, dear Brito, are not quite so easily stirred-up as the Algerines; but when there arise, among the former, any men who have art enough to seduce and impose upon them, they will go as violent lengths as the Africans. I will again observe, that it is firmly my opinion, that those who have the talent to impose artfully upon mankind, according to their various capacities, and to snatch

at every opportunity may rouse them to guilt of any kind. But if the situation of things is not propitious, the utmost subtlety of the human mind would exert its endeavours to no purpose.

When we enquire into the various revolutions which have happened in Europe, it appears that fortune, and the situation of affairs always befriended the prudence and intrepidity of those who brought those revolutions about. If the league became so formidable to the French monarchs, we must ascribe it to the disposition which the minds of the people were in at that time. The nation had long been apprehensive, that the religion which had devolved to them from their forefathers would be totally abolished; and they were prompted to take up arms from a principle of conscience. Under the regency of the duke of Orleans the leader of a party who had as great abilities, and was as much the darling of the people as the duke of Guise, would have made the Parisians attempt the same things, from views of interest, as they had formerly been prompted to from those of religion.

If ever France, since the minority of Lewis XIV, had cause to be apprehensive of a dangerous revolution, it was at the time when bank-bills were declared of no value. To what extremities may not those persons be carried, who, in an instant, lose the whole fortune which themselves and their ancestors had lawfully gained, by their abilities and pains? But the fortune and good genius of the duke of Orleans got the better of the juncture of things; so that he dispelled, with the greatest ease, all the clouds that seemed to threaten the most dreadful tempest. The people of Britany were punished for their rebellion; the parliament of Paris was banished, a circumstance that will scarcely be believed by posterity; all men bowed the neck to the yoke, because every one was wanting in courage and abilities; and there was not at that time a duke of Guise, a prince of Conde, nor even a cardinal de Rets.



I would advise, worthy Brito, all monarchs, who are desirous of knowing whether they have any thing to fear from their subjects, on account of a new tax they want to lay, to enquire if there is not, in their kingdom, some person who knows how to make a proper advantage of the people's uneasiness. But if it appears that they have no occasion to be apprehensive of any such cunning politician, they then may safely put their schemes in execution. All such subjects, how much soever they may suffer, as are not animated by an able leader, are made to groan in chains. The republic of Holland owes its rise to the princes of Orange; but the tyrannical administration of Philip II. would never have lost him the seven united provinces, had not the Dutch and their allies been united, conducted, and supported by the princes of the house of Nassau, and some other illustrious personages.

It is therefore no wonder, dear Brito, that in Algiers, and the other kingdoms of Barbary, where there are so many persons who flatter themselves with the hopes of obtaining the crown, by the destruction of him who wears it; there should be a considerable number of people, who endeavour to grasp at every opportunity of annoying their sovereign; and consequently, that many revolutions should happen in this kingdom. Ambitious men are fired by the hopes of rising to the throne, and making themselves the head of a growing party. The avaricious and cruel administration of the African princes, inclines their subjects to insurrections and rebellions; and consequently gives the ambitious an opportunity of exerting their talents. Were the ring-leaders of rebellion rewarded with thrones in Europe, possibly we might see as many tragical events in that quarter of the world, as in Africa.

The courier, dear Brito, is setting out, so that I am obliged to end my letter. Continue, I beseech thee, thy correspondence. I hope, before thou arrivest in Constantinople, that thou wilt visit some other nations, with whose manners and customs

thou mayest bring me acquainted. I reflect with infinite pleasure on the many particulars thou wilt instruct me in, when I shall have the happiness to meet thee in Constantinople. I will bring thither with me, a large number of very valuable books, which I purchased in Paris, London and Amsterdam; I will add them to those thou hast collected in the chief cities of Italy, and such provinces of France as thou hast travelled over. Thou dost not tell me whether thou hast met with any in Portugal. Though good books are very rarely found there; we yet, now and then, meet with some worthy the perusal of the learned. We will pass, good Brito, many happy days in this common library. Enjoy thy health; and live happy and contented.

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## LETTER CLXIX.

Observations on the strength of imagination in pregnant women.—Quotations from several authors endeavouring to prove that the force of imagination in women with child, has no effect on the fœtus in the womb.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

THERE was lately published, dear Isaac, a new book \*, in which are some excellent things. The author warmly opposes the surprizing effects ascribed to the strength of imagination in pregnant women. He shews, by strong and convincing arguments that the fœtus, in all its various states and configurations; having in itself, a distinct and separate circulation of blood; performing by its own power, all the functions necessary to life; being joined to the womb no otherwise than as

\* Entitled, A physical dissertation concerning the strength of the imagination, in women with child, upon the fœtus, by James Blundel, M. D. and member of the college of physicians in London, &c.

plants are to the earth; in fine, being a distinct individuum, which is no part of the mother, it consequently cannot receive any hurt merely by the imagination, as it subsists out of the sphere of that passion. This able naturalist foresaw how much the novelty of his sentiments would surprize those who ascribe as much power to the imagination of breeding woman, as to the Deity itself. Nothing can be so ridiculous, as to believe that the imagination hinted at can create pigs-heads, calves-feet, monkeys tails, the marks of several sorts of fruit, &c. Was this true, what would become of mankind? In five or six generations we should meet with nothing but mishapen human creators; for most women, during their pregnancy, apply themselves, one time or other, strongly to the contemplation of certain objects. Unhappy therefore would those children be, whose mothers should cast their eyes upon apes, asses, turky-cocks, &c. Some would come into the world with long pieces of flesh dangling at their noses; whilst others would appear with an ape's tail, or ears resembling those of Midas. The author in question sets his objection in its full force, by proving how necessary it is that there should be a stability in the seeds of the different species of animals. He manifestly proves, that mishapen bodies, to which the name of monsters is given, are thus fashioned merely from natural causes, which ought to be ascribed to the ordinary laws of motion, and not to the effect of the imagination. To justify this opinion, he enquires into the origin and progress of the production of animals; and takes a view of the different systems laid down by men of great learning, with regard to this operation of nature; and opens with that of Dr. Harvey. "This philosopher, says he, who has gained an immortal name by his discovery of the circulation of the blood, is the first who pointed out the true place where the chicken is formed, in the sperm of the egg. It is he also who found that all animals

" without

without exception proceed from an egg; and consequently all generation by putrefaction, *ex putri*, is an erroneous opinion. Harvey's system was greatly improved by the many experiments of *Reignier de Graaf*. He not only proved that eggs are the true and genuine origin of all animals, as well oviparous as viviparous, but likewise that they exist in the testicles of the women before conception; and that they become prolific in the fallopian tubes, whence they descend to the bottom of the womb. *Leewenhoeck* has given a different explication to this mystery of nature. He has discovered a great number of animalcules in the human seed, where it is vastly astonishing to see a great number of little worms, in the form of toads in miniature, swimming up and down. These are so extremely minute, that many thousand millions of them put together are not so big as a grain of sand, the diameter whereof is not the hundredth part of an inch. It is plain that these animalcules are absolutely necessary for the formation of the *fœtus*; it having been observed, that a man whose seed has none of these diminutive toads, is no ways qualified for generation, though he otherwise may seem robust, and free from any imperfection. *Leewenhoeck* has shewn so evidently this truth, that it is now uncontroverted. This discovery seems, at first sight, to destroy *de Graaf's* hypothesis; but they may be reconciled, as *Dr. Gardner* has done, by affirming that the egg is properly the nest in which the animalcule resides, and supports itself for some time. These are the three most rational systems that have been published concerning generation. They all agree, that the several parts of the *fœtus* exist somewhere before conception, upon which I would propose these questions. I. By what means the imagination of the mother is able instantaneously, without her knowledge or consent, and contrary to her inclination, to expunge the linea-

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“ments or features of the fœtus, that existed before  
 “conception, and produce in a moment new limbs,  
 “with new joints and veins, and new glands with  
 “the lymphatic vessels, &c. as is often seen at the  
 “birth of a monster, whose form, or the structure of  
 “whose body is entirely unknown to the mother.  
 “II. If the opinion of Leewenhoeck or Gardner is  
 “well grounded, how is the mother’s imagination  
 “impowered to act upon the fœtus, that is derived  
 “from the seed of man; and which, consequently,  
 “is an individuum distinct or separate from his\*.”

One of the principal motives which prompts many philosophers to reject a system, are the changes that have been made in it according as there may be occasion to obviate the several imperfections perceived in it. These frequent corrections are a proof of the internal defect which is inherent in the chief subject. But no opinion has varied more than that which allows an amazingly extensive power to the imagination of pregnant women. “The system of  
 “those who declare for the power of the imagination, says the author†, has changed so considerably from time to time in some very essential  
 “points, that it is impossible the same experiments  
 “should favour assertions so contradictory and repugnant to one another. The principal changes  
 “are, I. These assertors of the power of imagination are not agreed about the person upon whom  
 “the imagination acts; II. They do not know at  
 “what time the imagination exerts its force. III.  
 “They dispute with respect to the extent of its  
 “power; in a word, their opinion resembles a hydra, that has but one tail, and many heads. I  
 “confess that, in the present age, the despotic  
 “power of the imagination is lodged solely in the  
 “mother’s brain; and I am surprized that women  
 “men should be so weak as to own this; and  
 “thereby charge themselves unjustly with a fault.

\* Blundel’s Dissertation, p. 57, 64.

† Chap. iii. p. 9, 13.

“ which yet is very injurious to their sex. Nevertheless, several famous authors pretend that the imagination of the male animals, in general, contributes, as well as that of the female, to the colour of the fœtus.” It is believed, says Pliny, that the thought or imagination of both male and female, passing swiftly into the mind, confounds the resemblance \*. “ Some have made the child share in the plot, and place it at the head of the conspirators; pretending that the circumstances in which the fœtus is found, are the accidental causes, of the mother, and as a rule which teaches her what is fit and suited to the embryo. Others extend their cruelty so far, as to fancy that men are able, entirely by the strength of their imagination, to have an influence on persons who are at a great distance from them; by inflicting them with diseases, or healing them; by changing their constitution and make; in a word, that they are able to render them happy or miserable. They compare the imagination to a very powerful magnet, the sphere of whose activity is very extensive; and who consequently are able to attract, move and turn topsy turvy, all things animate or inanimate that are within the sphere of their activity. How odd and ridiculous soever this opinion may be, it nevertheless was defended by Paracelsus, Crellius, Pomponatius, and several more. I do not take it to be better grounded, than the opinion which asserts the truth of witchcraft, and judicial astrology. The fautors of the power of the imagination have also varied considerably with regard to the time in which that power works. The ancients fixed it at the very instant of conception; they meaning that of the amorous

\* *Gogitatio utriusque animum subito transvolans effingere similitudinem aut miscere existimatur. Plin. Hist. Nat. Lib. VIII. Cap. XII.*

"congress, according to Pliny\*." It is thought, says he, that whatever a person has seen, heard, remembered, or thought of, at the instant of conception contribute greatly to the resemblance.

"A modern author is of opinion, that the imagination does not begin to exert its power, till after the vivification of the foetus, that is, when it begins to stir in the womb†. In short, most modern authors agree, that the imagination may act upon the foetus from the instant of the conception, till the delivery, without taking the least pains to inform us what become of those large pieces of flesh and bone, which the imagination severs from the foetus, even when grown to a considerable size."

This objection, good Isaac, with which the author concludes the examination of the system of those who declare for the power of imagination, destroys all the subtleties of such philosophers as are ever eager to find out mysteries in things which are extremely natural. For if the imagination has the power to deprive a child, a little before its birth, of one of its limbs, what becomes of the substance which composed that limb? A still greater difficulty is, when the imagination instantly furnishes and creates some foreign body. Whence does it instantaneously take the substance or matter? Has it the like power with God, of creating it from nothing? Those philosophers who have so strongly asserted the opinion, that nothing could be produced from nothing, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, will they be so complaisant as to allow a woman's imagination, who longs for a loin of veal, the power of producing, in an instant, on the breast of the child, perfect in all respects, a piece of flesh resembling a loin of veal? But this is a mi-

\* *Similitudinem quidem in mente reputatio est & in qua creduntur multa fortuita pollere, visus, auditus, memoria haustæque imagines, sub ipso conceptu. Plinius, ibidem.*

† Dr. Turner's Defence of the XII. chapter of the first part of a Treatise de Morbis Cutaneis, p. 142.

race very frequently wrought by women, if we will believe those who suppose them indued with that power. They relate very surprizing incidents to this purpose, one whereof is as follows, which the author banters very agreeably\*.

“ PHILIP MEURS an apostolical prothonotary  
 “ had a sister, handsomely shaped in every part of  
 “ her body, but unhappily she had no head, in-  
 “ stead of which she had the shell of a fish, re-  
 “ sembling a muscle, over her neck, that open-  
 “ ed and shut, and by which they used to feed  
 “ this muscle-nymph, as with a spoon. The  
 “ accident was owing to this; her mother, when  
 “ with child of her, had a very great longing for  
 “ some muscles which she saw at a fishmongers,  
 “ but failed to have her cravings indulged that  
 “ instant. The sister to Philip Meurs, Miss  
 “ Muscle, lived to twelve years of age in that  
 “ monstrous condition; but one morning, as she  
 “ gaped her shells to take in food, she shut them  
 “ together on a sudden with so much violence,  
 “ that she broke them against the spoon; and died  
 “ that instant. What man ever heard so strange  
 “ a story? A muscle fed with a spoon! Credat  
 “ Judæus apella, non ego. Believe it who will, not  
 “ I. Dr. Turner, to convince the reader of the  
 “ possibility of this incident, says, that he himself  
 “ saw a child born with a fleshy, or rather car-  
 “ taliginous substance, upon its head, in the shape  
 “ of a granadier’s cap. This monster was born  
 “ alive, but died immediately after its birth.  
 “ I could tell you, if I would, the deposition  
 “ made by the mother; but I do not think it is  
 “ proper. What an odd sort of argument is this?  
 “ A child comes into the world with a granadier’s  
 “ cap, and the pretended cause of it is artfully  
 “ concealed from us. The child had not an oppor-  
 “ tunity of receiving the least nourishment, but  
 “ died in the birth, Ergo, it is not absurd to  
 “ say, that a muscle was fed with a spoon eleven

\* Dr. Turner’s Defence, &c. p. 42, &c,



“ years, and that unluckily this spoon killed the  
 “ virgin muscle, by breaking its jaws. However,  
 “ not to keep the reader any longer in suspense  
 “ with respect to the prodigy of Miss Muscle; does  
 “ not Fienus, who is the only person who published  
 “ it, declare positively, that Meurs very seldom  
 “ spoke truth?\*

The same may be said, dear Isaac, of part of the stories which are related concerning monsters and imperfect creatures, as of that which our author so justly laughs at. The same happens to them as to all incidents related by different persons, the marvellous of which increase every moment; all those who repeat them amplifying the circumstances. A piece of flesh no bigger than a nut, is soon metamorphosed into a granadier's cap. This is exactly like what is told concerning the man who pretended he had laid an egg, before the sun went down it was strongly affirmed, at the end of the streets, that he used to lay an hundred daily. It is not but that deformed and monstrous children are brought into the world, as is but too often proved by experience; but then these births happen very rarely, and are owing to causes of a different nature than a female imagination, which cannot act directly upon the fœtus. What power soever we may grant it, it must necessarily employ bodily force to produce the least effect on the flesh of a child. Matter only is capable of acting upon matter so as to cause fractures and dislocations, and bring about a total change in it. Persons who are beside themselves will imagine they have a glass head, and therefore are afraid of breaking it; but then this does not cause any change in the conformation of their bodies. Now is not absurd to assert, that a woman, who is not able,

\* Dico me non credere, quia enim ipse erat senex & historia erat vetusta, ob cuius vetustatem non poterat facile ab aliquo redargui, & deo tum in illa, tum in aliis quas aliquando commemorabat, sæpe erat valde infelix, conjiciendo veritatem. Deus sit animæ ejus propitius. Fienus Quest. XXII.

by the strength of her imagination, to produce the least change in her body, can occasion such an effect upon that of her child?

The author refutes perfectly well the objections raised against these reasons. He destroys all the false principles which father Mallebranche had indiscreetly grounded on a story, which, tho' very extraordinary, might yet be easily accounted for from ordinary causes, and the laws of motion. To come, says he, to father Mallebranche's story "About seven or eight years since, says this father\*, was seen, in the hospital for incurables, a young man born an idiot, whose body was dislocated in the same places in which those of criminals are broke. He has lived twenty years in this condition, and has been seen by many. The cause of so dismal an accident was owing to a desire his mother had to see a criminal broke upon the wheel, which she accordingly indulged. Children see the same things their mothers do; hear the same cries, receive the like impressions from objects, and are moved by the same passions. The blows given to the malefactor struck violently on the mother's imagination, and rebounded on the child's tender brain, the fibres of which, being unable to resist the flood of spirits, were broken. Hence he came into the world an idiot. The impetuosity of the motion of the mother's animal spirits strongly dilated her brain, and communicated itself to the various parts of her body, which corresponded to those of the criminal. But as the mother's bones were strong enough to resist the impetuosity of the spirits, they were not hurt. Possibly she might not feel the least pain on that occasion; but this progress of the spirits might be so vehement and rapid, as to carry off or break

\* Recherche de la verite, Livr. ii. Chap. 7. quoted by Quadel, pag. 23 & 39.

“ the tender part of the child’s bones.  
 “ And it must be observed, that had the woman  
 “ in question turned the motion of her spirits to-  
 “ wards some other part of her body, by strong-  
 “ ly scratching her back-side, the child’s bones  
 “ would not have been broke.” Is not this a fine  
 remedy which father Mallebranche recommends to  
 pregnant women, to preserve their children from  
 the fatal effects of the imagination !

To this reflection of the author, my good  
 friend Isaac, I will add another. Had Aristotle  
 advised women to scratch their back-sides to check  
 the effects of the imagination, how strongly would  
 the modern Naturalists, and particularly father  
 Mallebranche, have ridiculed such childish coun-  
 sel ? Aristotle, would they have said, who not only  
 endeavours to peep into all the arcana of nature ;  
 but also to prescribe rules for all dangerous cases  
 that may happen, orders women to scratch their but-  
 tocks, to preserve the fœtus from the impressions  
 of the imagination. Can any thing be more silly  
 and incoherent than to prescribe such a remedy ; and  
 does not the Greek philosopher deserve the title of  
 prince of the fumbler, rather than that of prince of the  
 philosophers ? But here we have a modern philoso-  
 per who prescribes so whimsical a recipe, yet no  
 one endeavours to set it in a ridiculous light ; and  
 all that is done is, to deny the power of, and the  
 advantage that may accrue from it. By the way,  
 dear Isaac, I am surprized that father Mallebranche  
 should have given the preference to this part  
 of the human body. Had he indeed been a Je-  
 suit, there would have been nothing very extraordi-  
 nary in his choice. To wave raillery, dear Isaac,  
 had not the English author reason to say : Who-  
 ever saw a fracture, and especially several, continued  
 twenty years, without growing callous ? I will  
 not deny, but that there might have been, in  
 the hospital of the incurables, a child, the con-  
 struction of whose limbs might have been so singular  
 and deformed as to give occasion for such a story

But it is very probable that the child in question came into the world with the bones both of the Carpus and Tarsus disjointed ; which ignorant people might consider as the fractures made in the bodies of malefactors ; and give the mother an opportunity of forging this idle fiction, to excite the charity of tender-hearted people. Besides, some reputable authors have observed, that bones are sometimes found that never had any solidity at all, or had lost their solidity \*.

After that the English naturalist has strongly and invincibly refuted the impossibility of the effects ascribed to the imagination of women, and demonstrated that they are repugnant to the principles of anatomy, (as the mother's nerves have no communication with those of the child :) He shews, that as the passions of the body are only motions of the blood and spirits, whose velocity is greater or less surprize, with respect to the mind, is no more than a sudden comparison made, with or without pain, between an object which is familiar and another that is unknown to us. " But are children, says he †, capable of making these various reflections, at a time when they are a mere sensitive lump of flesh. The mother's thoughts indeed are very extensive ; but then it is not possible for the child to comprehend them ; its understanding not being yet formed by the knowledge of exterior objects, which affect or disturb the mother, who is frightened at a sword, because she disturbs the hand which holds it ; and is frightened at a dog, as she is sensible that it may possibly bite her. Those who pretend with father Malbranche, that the child sees the same objects as the mother, and hears the same sounds, must mean alio modo that children can see without light, and hear when their ears are stoped. And how would it be possible for the mother to communicate her thoughts to the child, in her womb, when

\* Blundel's Physical Dissertation, 40. &c.

† Pag. 53 & 54.



her soul is absolutely separated from that of the fœtus ? ”

The physical reasons which the author gives for those marks, and the deformity sometimes found in children, are as judicious and natural as those alledged by him to refute the effects of the imagination. He ascribes the birth of monstrous creatures to the indispositions and infirmities of the animals in the womb ; to a stop put to the growing of some parts of the fœtus ; to some violence or force her body met with ; to the bad health of the parents, and the eggs changing their place. “ There is no doubt, says he \*, but children in the womb are as liable to sickness, as after they are born. They are not exempt from cataracts, the gout, &c. Would it not therefore be very strange, and even astonishing, that a tender body, like that of the fœtus, which is capable of receiving the slightest impression, should always come into the world, without discovering the sad effects of so great a number of infirmities, by some mark or deformity ? The several parts of the fœtus are all plan’d in the egg, but they do not grow equally. Some display themselves soon, whereas others do not appear till a long time afterwards, or perhaps never, if they meet with any obstacle. For if the fœtus is indispos’d, the obstructions of the vessels may deprive certain parts of their nourishment, which afterwards remain in their first state, without growing or encreasing, at the same time that the rest become perfect. Whenever that happens, this phenomenon is thought so strange, that the vulgar do not fail immediately to cry that a monster is born ; and to ascribe the monstrous quality of the child to the mother’s imagination, tho’ there is nothing unnatural in all this, for instance, the brain both within and without is at first like two watry bladders ; but afterwards that very clear water condenses or thickens, and is covered only with a

\* Blundel’s Physical Dissertations p. 89, & seq.

delicate skin\*. Some children have come into the world, without the appearance of any brain. This particular is related in Blegny's journals. He relates that a female child had no brain at her birth, and yet lived five days†. Doubtless this child's brain continued in its first state, occasioned by some obstructions, and consequently appeared watry. Whenever a child is brought forth, bearing some resemblance to an ape, a frog, or something still uglier, it must be ascribed to the same cause; I mean, that as the lips and cheeks were not yet arrived at their perfection, and the mouth being stretched as wide as the ears§, which then are imperceptible: Children born with these imperfections appear horrible to the spectators, and occasion many fabulous stories. It is no difficult matter to discover the origin of red marks. It often proceeds from the skin's not being of a due thickness in that part, whence it appears as though it had been flead; for as all the veins are close to the surface of the skin, they therefore are easily seen. Sometimes this defect is not owing so much to the skin, as to the structure of the arteries and veins; the capillary branches of the former being extremely numerous, and more extended than usual; and those of the other vessels being but few, narrow, and discharging the blood slowly. The body of the fœtus being very tender is also liable to be bruised and hurt by the strong convulsions of the tubes, and those of the womb; as well as by the violent contraction of the muscles of the abdomen,

\* In capite circumcrescente membrana, ex aqua limpidissima cerebrum concinnatur. Cerebrum & cerebellum ex limpidissima aqua in coagulum calosum densantur. Harvæus Exercitat. LXIX.

† Puella sine cerebro nata in tota cranii capitate nihil præter aquam liquidam deprehendere licuit, omnino adimplentem membranam, nullo præsentente cerebro, aut substantia solida. Blegny Zodaicus Medico-gallicus, April, 1681, observat. III.

§ Oris rictus ad utramque aurem protensus cernitur. Harvæus, Exercitat. LXIX.

which

which press upon it forcibly. Hippocrates \* is of opinion, that the ill construction of the womb may occasion deformities. The child, says he, in the womb, will be maimed if it has not room enough, and is not at its full ease. It is like, in this respect, to a vegetable, which meeting with a stone, or some other substance, that confines it in its growth, grows insensibly deformed; thin on one side, and thick on the other."

Is it possible, dear Isaac, that as good sense, instructed and guided by anatomy, should offer to the mind so many natural methods for explaining the imperfect formation of animals, several philosophers should yet have sought for expedients to maintain and justify the prejudices of vulgar and ignorant persons; and ascribe to the power of the imagination in women the causes of certain effects, which nature presented them in so clear a manner? But, say the followers of Mallebranche, who cannot bear to see the remedy of their foudere exploded. "If a female imagination can have no effect upon a fœtus, how comes it that some women have been hurt merely by a fright? If the fœtus is insensible to whatever happens in the mother's imagination, how can it share in her fear?" To this I answer, friend Isaac, that it really has no share in this fear; but is strongly affected by the corporal impressions which this dread of its parent occasions; by the motions of the diaphragm and the muscles of the abdomen, which, pressing strongly the intestines, obliges the womb to thrust upon the fœtus, and sometimes destroy it. The strong passions disorder very much the human body. Surprise, terror and anger, have the same effect upon the human machine, as forcibly shaking a clock. Should we be surprized if a man, upon his falling down, should put the springs of his watch out of order? Would it be necessary to enquire, in the imagination of this man, for the

\* De Genitur. Art. XI.

cause of this disorder? and, to prevent it, should he scratch his back-side as he fell? It must be confessed that, were some of the ancient philosophers to return again into the world, they would find, in writings of certain moderns, matter sufficient to revenge themselves of the sarcasms (and these often too violent) sometimes levelled at their opinion.

Enjoy thy health, dear Isaac, live contented and happy.

## L E T T E R CLXX.

The city of Tripoli guarded only by dogs.—

Some observations on the discipline of the dogs in the Roman capitol.—The Indians and Italians compared, with regard to superstitious worship, bigotry, and ridiculous ceremonies.

JACOB BBITO, to AARON MONCECA.

Tripoli.—

I Took notice, good Monceca, in my last letter, of the conformity between the people of Tripoli and those of Sparta. They also have imitated some of the Roman customs. They trust the guarding of their city in the night-time, to mastiffs, which they shut up, during the day, in one of the bastions of the rampart. These mastiffs discharge very faithfully the duties of their functions; they patrol through the streets of the city; and if they happen to meet with any person, they are sure to tear him to pieces. The moment day breaks, they go of themselves to the door of their prison. They indeed are less quiet here than those dogs who were appointed to guard the capitol; for they bark the instant they hear any person come near their habitations, and their roaring is heard in all that quarter of the city; whereas those of the Romans were obliged, upon pain of death, to be quiet in the day-time. The people of Tripoli, in this respect, shew more judgment than the Ro-



mans ; they not requiring from brutes, any actions but such as suit their nature ; and are not so silly as to expect, from them, a chain of reasoning.

I know not, friend Monceca, if thou ever tookest notice of the exact discipline which the dogs in the capitol were obliged to keep. One would couclude that the Romans were superstitiously persuaded, that the brutes in question must have been inspired by the Deity. “ They are fed, says Tully, in order “ that they may bark : For this reason it is not “ thought strange to hear them bark, in the night, “ at any one whom they may hear coming, “ though a person of the greatest goodness and “ virtue ; the unseasonableness of the hour excuses their mistake, and authorizes their suspicion. “ But they are sure to have their legs broke “ whenever they bark, in the day-time, against “ persons who go to the temple, to offer up “ their prayers to the immortal gods \*.”

Is not this an excellent maxim, and founded on good sense ? Does it not argue great wisdom, to require a dog to forget that he is such during the day, and remember what creature he is in the night, upon pain of being hang'd by the neck till he is dead ? When we reflect, dear Monceca, on the absurd and childish customs that strongly prevailed, and which were considered as essential laws, among most of the ancient nations, we are astonished to find that men, who performed such glorious actions, and exhibited so many proofs of the greatness of their genius, could have given into, and approved of customs, which now appear incoherent and ridiculous to the most barbarous nations. This is a circumstance that cannot but mortify the pride of man. One would be apt to imagine that the capacity of wretched mortals is such, that they are never able to institute, in a state, a body of laws equally wise and judicious ; but are always obliged to mix a certain portion of follies and superstition with the most just reflection.

\* Cicero pro Roscio Amerino, cap. xx.

Hence I should be apt to think, worthy Monceca, that all nations resemble, in many points, those whom, at first sight, they seem most to differ from. This reflection may appear singular to you, and it seems a kind of paradox to suppose, that the Italians, a people of a gentle, supple, and voluptuous cast of mind, averse to war, and loving the polite arts, should yet bear a conformity to Indians of a savage disposition, unpolished and ignorant, and inured to labour and fatigue. Nevertheless, what difference soever we may imagine is found between the turn of mind of the several people in question, it will appear, upon a strict enquiry, that they resemble one another, even in the most essential things.

The Italians bear so great a reverence for their pontiff, as almost amounts to idolatry. They set him upon an altar, offer incense to him, fall prostrate before him, and kiss in the humblest manner his toe. Let us now take a view of the honours which the Indians pay to their princes. They appear before them in a posture of the utmost humility; and never address them but in terms as pompous as the soothing titles of holiness, and of God's vicar upon earth. The Chineze, whenever they come before their emperors, fall down nine times before them. Is not this equivalent to the humble kissing of the sacred slipper?

"In India, says a modern author\*, all the Pagods are renowned for some miracles, or extraordinary cures, of the legends of which a history is composed, for the comfort and edification of devout persons. The piety of one shall be directed to Jagarnat, and of another to Wistnoo. A Bramin, taking the handkerchiefs of these devotees, or any other things they may present to them, rubs them against the god whose priest he is, and afterwards returns

\* Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Idolatrous Nations. Tom. II. part I. p. 2.

“ them to the several persons to whom they belong.” Is not this, excellent Monceca, an exact copy of what is done in Europe? Ignatius Loyola is there instead of Jagarnat, and Francis d’Assise of Wistnoo. The Jesuits and Franciscans are just upon a level, in this respect, with the Bramins, since they rub the shrines of their patriarchs with handkerchiefs; and, what is still more surprizing, the monks of St. Genevieve rub, in like manner, the case of that saint’s shrine, with pieces of linnen fastned at the end of a pole; though they might as well rub her pedestal with it, or the threshold of her church-door. The monks abovementioned employ as much art in taking advantage of the superstition of the Europeans, as the Bramins do, with regard to the simplicity and ignorance of the Indians. Has not the author who informs us of these artifices of their priests reason to say, that the priests act here exactly as in other countries?

But this is not the only circumstance in which the faith of the Italians agrees with that of the East-Indians. Both people make processions to their pagods. The former carry their saints up and down the streets; and the latter go about as ceremoniously with their gods. The author just quoted furnishes me also with this second particular. “ In the procession, say he\*, which the Indians “ make to their Gods, they follow some usages “ that are pretty well known in Europe. Such, “ for instance, is that of the litter, on which “ they carry the god who is led about; the portable altar employed in these processions; the “ flowers scattered in the way of the idol; the “ perfumes and odours they burn in its honour, “ &c. I shall make no mention of the cries of these “ devotees, of the prayer which they offer up “ howling; of the gesticulations which the presence of the god excites; their groans and “ their transports, the too ordinary effect of

\* Ceremonies, &c. *ibid.*

"custom and education." Would not one imagine, friend Monceca, this to be the description of one of those Nazarene processions, in which the shrine of some saint is carried, in order to put a stop to a long sterility, or to procure an abundance of rain.

By the way, it is not barely to images that the Romans pay a superstitious worship. I have often seen, whilst I was at Rome, a crowd of people falling prostrate in the streets, through which the pontiff passed, escorted by a splendid cavalcade. On these occasions were heard the like groans and transports, which the sight of their Gods inspires the Indians with. What a spectacle must it be to a philosopher, to see all the inhabitants of a city fall at the feet of a man, and cry with a trembling voice, holy father absolve us from our crimes; bestow upon us indulgences, to serve us in our expiring moments! It would be the same to me if they should say, favour us with a passport to secure us from the sheriff's officers of hell. I will confess to thee, dear Monceca, that I always blushed at the weakness of the human mind, every time I beheld such scenes. What would Socrates that wise Athenian, have said, had something of this kind been told him? I question if he could have kept his countenance. He would have laughed at the folly of the Italians, just as he did at that of the Greeks, and have met with the like fate. The Inquisitors would not have been more human than those tyrants who sentenced him to die. In all countries where superstition prevails, it is dangerous to attempt to enlighten the minds of men; especially in those where the scepter and censor are in the same hands. Any person who violates the laws of morality, and acts in such a manner as is injurious to society, easily obtains in Rome a pardon; but woe be to him if he has attempted anything that tends to the diminution of the ecclesiastical authority: his ruin is infallible, and the most severe punishment is inflicted upon him.



To return, excellent Monceca, to the conformity between the Indians and Italians. In the kingdom of Deean, the Nairos have a right to demand the last favours of any maidens or married women whose beauty may have charmed them. The husbands think it an honour to wear the horns, when planted by persons of so high a rank. In Rome, the cardinals and prelates; and, in the rest of Italy, the monks and priests have not yet reduced to the form of a law the power, which they have over the fair-sex; but then they enjoy in effect the same privileges as the Nairos; and there is no Roman but thinks himself vastly happy to be honoured with a visit, in which he himself has much less concern than his wife.

Among the Banians, the chief Bramin has the same rights and prerogatives as the Roman pontiff. It is he who allows dispensations for marriages, and grants divorces, for all which ready money must be paid.

Here follows another conformity between the belief of the Italians and Indians; which comprehends, at the same time, many of the chief articles of the religion of the people. 'Tis extracted from the same author whom I copied before. "The Indians, says he\*, when they grow in years, perform penances, and such like works, considered as meritorious, in order that, when they quit this life, their soul may go and reside in a sound body, or that of a person of distinction. To this motive we must ascribe all their pious works, alms, retirements, foundations, &c. Those, who have not strength of mind to undergo austerities, give into the practices just mentioned; bestow alms very liberally on the Bramins, and enjoin their heirs to offer up prayers to God in their favour. There are some also who amass immense treasures during their lives, in order that they may have wherewithal to redeem themselves after death,

\* Ceremonies, &c. page 27.

“ when their souls are so unhappy as to enter into  
“ the body of a miserable wretch.”

The notion of the transmigration of souls produces the same effects among the Indians, as purgatory among the Nazarenes. I imagine I see in the Banians, who perform extraordinary acts of charity, in order that, at their quitting this mortal life, their souls may go and animate a well-disposed body, so many farmer-generals appointing, in their expiring moments some friers to bestow in legacies part of the treasure stolen by them.

Methinks there is likewise a great conformity between the rich Italian and Indian devotees, “ who,  
“ not having courage enough to submit to austerities, purchase, upon consideration of a certain sum the privilege of being exempt from them.  
“ Such a favour is bestowed on a superstitious, but  
“ voluptuous Roman.” Upon giving ten pistoles he is permitted to eat flesh during Lent, and on such days on which it is prohibited by order of the pope. He likewise supplies himself with a considerable number of indulgences, which he purchases at a very dear rate, and imagines to be of great use after death.

I very justly imagine, dear Monceca, that there is a great resemblance between the usages and manners of the two people, of whose superstition I have just now taken a view; and it is not only in those things relating to the ceremonies and exterior worship, that they act much after the same manner. They entertain the same idea with regard to mystical devotion, and the ridiculous macerations practised by some Nazarene monks. The Indians have their capuchins, their fathers of la Trappe, their Camalduli and their Carthusians, &c. Here follows an exact relation of their manner of living, which seems to be copied from some account, that contained the extravagant history of monastic penances. “ Sita was the inventor of pilgrimages, and the patriarch of the Indian hermits,  
“ known by the name of Fakirs. When they find  
“ themselves

“ themselves inclined to sleep, they let themselves  
 “ fall down on the-ashes of cow-dung, and such like  
 “ filth. They even sometimes sprinkle their long  
 “ and dirty hair with these ashes, by way of pow-  
 “ der. Some retire into a kind of ditch, where they  
 “ receive no light but from a very little hole. They  
 “ will stay in these places nine or ten days, always  
 “ continuing in the same posture, and without eat-  
 “ ing or drinking. It is affirmed, that others pass  
 “ their whole lives without once lying down: But  
 “ whenever they are strongly inclined to sleep, they  
 “ lean against a rope, which hangs between two  
 “ trees. Other penitents will stand, during ten or  
 “ twelve hours in the day, with one foot lifted up  
 “ on high, their eyes fixed upon the sun, and hold-  
 “ ing a censer filled with fire, wherein they throw  
 “ incense in honour of some idol. Others continue  
 “ for ever seated, or rather squatted upon their but-  
 “ tocks, in which posture their hands are always  
 “ lifted up different ways over their heads, &c.†”

The austerities of these Fakirs may be very just-  
 ly compared to the follies of some Nazarene monks.  
 Ignatius Loyola, the mighty patriarch of the Jesuits,  
 travelled for many years with one foot covered, and  
 the other naked, and let himself be eat up with lice;  
 he having confined himself, with a parcel of wretch-  
 es like himself, in an hospital. Francis d’Assise used  
 to roll about in the snow, as a horse will in straw.  
 His disciples, at this day, prick their bodies with  
 iron-points, go half naked, and are as dirty as the  
 Fakirs; equally useless to society; as ignorant, as  
 stupid, and as much revered by the vulgar. Can  
 any resemblance be stronger than this? Here fol-  
 lows another which is no less so. ’Tis found among  
 these Fakirs, and the mystical disciples of Molinos.  
 “ To all that has been writ concerning these In-  
 “ dian hermits, says the author so often cited, I  
 “ shall add, that devout women are seen who go  
 “ and kiss the most secret parts of their bodies, and

† Religious Customs and Ceremonies of the Idolatrous Na-  
 tions, Tom. II. Part I. page 7.

“yet never avert their eyes, are never put out of countenance, or is any sensibility discovered on either side. They even affect, at their receiving these extravagant tokens of respect, a kind of extasy and tranquility of mind†.”

Am I not in the right, worthy Monceca, to assert that we meet in India with that quietism which Molinos preached in the midst of Rome, and which so many Nazarene priests have adopted? When I think of these women going to kiss the most hidden parts of the Fakirs, methinks I behold father Ginnard, with his eyes turned up towards Heaven, fasten his lips on La Cadiere's bubbies; and a little after this feat, I see him kissed by La Batterelle, another of his penitents. How many monks in Italy transform into relicks, in the same manner as the Fakirs, the most peccant parts of their bodies? If their devotees had the same way of thinking as Rabelais, they would be contented with receiving a kiss on their faces, and no where else. The French author in question could never be prevailed upon to accompany, to the audience of the pope, the ambassador in whose retinue he came to Rome; and being asked the reason for it, he replied, “I have a great aversion to bad smells; and since my master, who represents an august monarch, is going to kiss the pope's toe, doubtless I, being but a poor physician, will be allowed only to kiss his back-side.”

The post is setting out, so I am extremely hurried, and must therefore conclude my letter. Always behold the manners and customs of all nations with a philosophic eye, and then thou wilt easily perceive, that those who sometimes seem to differ mostly in their manners, have nevertheless many things in common.

Enjoy thy health, dear Monceca, live contented and happy, and always seek for thy felicity in the love of philosophy and the sciences.

† Religious Customs, &c. *ibid.*



## LETTER CLXXI.

Philosophical disquisitions concerning the intellectual principle, or souls of brutes.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

**S**OME difficulties occur, worthy friend Isaac, in the knowledge of the soul of brutes, which can never be surmounted by the mind of man. What hypothesis soever the philosophers invent, to unfold the knowledge of it, they will only give rise to new doubts. They indeed will shew the weakness of the systems combated by them; but in destroying them they will not establish their own, which, though it will not have the defects perceived in the rest, will yet have others equally considerable. On what side soever a philosopher, divested of prejudice, turns his eye, he perceives barriers which check the progress of all his reflections, render them ineffectual, and oppose his researches.

If we consider the soul of brutes as a simple modification of matter, we run the hazard of concluding, from this principle, (in examining the nature of the soul of man) that it is material like that of brutes. For if matter can be endued with a self-moving power, it is able to receive the faculty of thinking, conceiving, reflecting, however grossly and imperfectly soever it may possess these qualities; yet by subtilizing still more, by making it act upon organs of a more delicate texture, I shall be able to raise it easily to that point of perfection which I perceive in the most perfect and most enlightned human soul. I even shall not find it very difficult to carry it up to that height, by raising it gradually. I shall find but little difference between an elephant, and a heavy Lapland peasant, to whose language I am a stranger. I shall

shall perceive that the two animals act equally in consequence of what may be of use to them; that they articulate sounds which I do not understand; that they are susceptible of pity, anger, fear, friendship; that they are endued with memory, and shun what may sometimes annoy them. The instant I discover a perfect resemblance in the intellectual principles of the two animals in question, I have a certainty of the possibility of the common materiality of their essence. It is then easy for me to raise myself, by degrees, from the soul of the Lapland animal, to that of the philosopher Descartes; reason suggesting to me plainly, that the souls of the same species of animals cannot be of several different kinds. Nothing could be so absurd and ridiculous, as to assert that the understanding, in some men, resulted from a spiritual principle, and that of some others from a material principle.

When, in order to obviate the numberless difficulties that arise, in the system of those who declare brutes to be endued with a material soul, we are for admitting that of Descartes, reason strongly opposes an hypothesis, the falsity of which is plainly discovered to us by the laws of nature, as well as by what we see performed every day by brutes. How can we figure to ourselves that a dog, in whom we perceive all the indications of memory, conception, and reasoning; who is sensible, not only to those passions which act directly on the senses, as hunger, thirst and pain; but likewise on those, the chief operations whereof are in the mind, among which are friendship, pity, tenderness, gratitude and affection; how, I say, can any person figure to himself, that this dog is a mere machine, which, according to father Mallebranche, cries without pain, eats without pleasure, believes without being conscious of it; desires nothing, and fears nothing\*? That person

\* Mallebranche, Recherche de la Verite, Book IV. Chap. II. pag. 432.

must have a very strong faith who can believe such things ; and I am firmly persuaded, friend Isaac, that those who have asserted the probability of this with so much warmth, did not believe the possibility of it, in the manner they pretended.

Some philosophers have invented a third system, to remove the difficulties of the other two, by asserting, that the soul of brutes is neither material nor spiritual, but a middle being between spirit and matter. But how silly is such a distinction. This medium substance must either have extension, or else be unextended ; if it be extended, it consequently is material, because whatever is extended is material. But if it be not extended, it is consequently spiritual ; because whatever has no extension, and exists, is necessarily spiritual. If the soul of brutes be neither spiritual nor material, it is consequently a chimerical being, as the vacuum of the Epicureans is a mere negation.

This is altogether as ridiculous as what the Peripatetics advance, when they pretend to prove that the soul of brutes is meerly a material form, because it differs infinitely from that of man, in the knowledge of good, and several other things. If the difference between the essence and genus of souls was owing to the different degrees of perception, it then must be asserted, that those of children are not of the same kind with that of men, who have attained to the age of reason. To this the Peripatetics and schoolmen answer, that the soul of a child and that of a man do not differ in genus and order ; but that the cause of the little perception that is seen in children is owing to the organs not having yet attained their perfection.

But this weak argument is destroyed by such an objection as is unanswerable. “ Since only the  
“ organs, may these philosophers be answered, de-  
“ termine the degree of the understanding and  
“ conception of souls, who can tell, if the soul  
“ of a horse was placed in the body of Aristotle  
“ or that of Scotus, but that it might have ac-  
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“red the qualities found in those of the philosophers in question. In like manner, if their souls had animated the body of an ass, all the tokens of reasoning they could have given, would have been, to chuse the best thistles in a meadow. The organs, according to you, being the only circumstance, to which we must ascribe the amazing disparity found between the operations of the soul of children, and the conceptions of that of men; you ought not to wonder, that the same intellectual being, if lodg’d in a well organized human body, such as that of Aristotle, should make a philosopher; and produce only silly, uniform actions in the body of an ass, which perhaps may not be the hundredth part so well organized as that of a child.”

The instant those philosophers, who declare in favour of material forms, have not recourse to revelation, it will be impossible for them to shew, that it is necessary, in order to explain the different degrees of understanding which appear between the soul of brutes and that of men, to admit a difference in their essence. Their opponents may always object to them very justly, that this difference is of no signification, since it may be form’d solely by the organs. Thus, so far from being necessary according to their system, for the soul of brutes to be a medium substance between matter and spirit, as certain philosophers have pretended, that of men may be material; since it will be of the same kind with that of brutes, which, according to the Peripatetics, is no more than a material form.

The difficulties which occur in these different hypotheses, with respect to the soul of brutes, have given rise, in these latter times, to an opinion that is singular enough and no less improbable than the rest, and as liable to objections. According to this opinion, brutes are inform’d with an immaterial and intellectual principle. It is not within these few years that philosophers first asserted, that brutes argue with as much wisdom as



men. Strato, Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus, and Anaxagoras have taught, that they were endued with understanding, as likewise did Philo and Galen: But it never entered into the head of any of these philosophers to suppose them animated with a spiritual soul. It was scarce possible for them to do this, as they looked upon that of man no other-wise than as a material substance. Some learned men in these latter ages, have admitted a spiritual principle in brutes. In confirmation of this opinion, an author has very lately published a book in which are a great number of curious observations and singular reflections†. According to this writer, “the soul of brutes is an immaterial and intelligent substance. An active principle endued with sensations, and with them only. The human soul, says he, comprehends in itself, abstracted from its essential activity, two faculties which furnish that activity with the matter on which it exercises itself. One is, the faculty of forming clear and distinct ideas; the other is, the faculty of feeling or perceiving. Which should prevent our supposing, a spirit endued with the last of these two qualities, without having the former, which should be able to receive none but indistinct ideas, or confused conceptions. As this mind would be confined to much narrower limits than the human soul, it would be essentially or specifically different from it.”

This system, dear Isaac, is as liable as the rest to such objections as are unanswerable. For, supposing it might so happen, that there is a spiritual principle endued only with the faculty of sensation, this would not resolve a thousand difficulties which occur to the mind. How is it possible for a substance of a spiritual nature to perish or be destroyed? Having no parts, it consequently is not

† It is entitled, A Philosophical Essay on the Soul of Brutes, containing various reflections on the nature of liberty, on that of our sensations, on the union of the soul and body, and on the immortality of the former, &c.

capable of being divided. 'Tis contrary to the most evident notions, to suppose, that a spiritual being, in order for it to be subsisted, must necessarily be lodged in a natural body. As the mind is entirely distinct from matter, it cannot receive any injury from the various changes which happen in such matter. "As the soul, says Mallebranche\*, is a spiritual substance, it must be immortal; it not being possible for us to conceive, that a substance can be annihilated. To conceive the possibility of this, we must have recourse to a most extraordinary power of God." To this, dear Isaac, I know the following answer may be made, that a greater power is not required to create, than to annihilate a substance; and that if God, when he informed brutes with a spiritual soul, resolved that it should be destroyed by death, it will be destroyed. But this does not prove that brutes are informed with a spiritual principle: All that can be inferred from it is this, that, if there really was such a principle in brutes, God is able to annihilate it. Nevertheless, as he always acts by methods that shew the utmost simplicity; and that the system which supposes the soul of brutes to be material, is much better suited to the ideas we entertain of the order of substances, both material and spiritual, than that which supposes it to be incorporeal; we must take it for granted that he created it material. For why should we suppose a spiritual principle in animals, when all the functions we ascribe to them may be performed by a material principle? Farther, we cannot conceive how a thing which is spiritual should be deprived of the faculty of forming distinct ideas. This is repugnant to the just notions we have concerning the essence of the mind. Thought is a property of a spiritual thing, as extent is of matter. As therefore there cannot be a material being without extent, neither can there be a spiritual one deprived of perception.

\* Recherche de la Verite, Lib. IV. Chap. VIII. p. 428.

When certain philosophers are for supposing such an incorporeal substance, as is capable of forming only indistinct ideas, they require us to admit of a substance or matter, which has extent but no depth. But suppositions of this kind will give a sanction to the grossest errors. After having admitted such a spiritual principle in brutes, as should never have any ideas but those of the most confused nature, might not another kind of principle be admitted, indued only with sensations? The various essences of the mind would be multiplied in infinitum; and if we admit two sorts of spirituality, we may admit thirty. But these notions are not only repugnant to sound philosophy, but also to the most simple knowledge.

If we are for supposing a spiritual principle in brutes, this principle must necessarily be the same with that in man; it must have the same essence; and the difference we perceive in its operations, must arise only from the various structure of the organs. But what a dilemma will this plunge us into? We either must suppose the souls of brutes to be immortal, or assert that those of men are not. If it is replied, that they are equally so, it then will be asked, what becomes of the soul of brutes after their body is destroyed? Will there be a paradise, a purgatory, a hell, allotted for them? No man has yet been so silly as to maintain such an opinion. Will they pass into other modifications of matter? In this case we should be forced to admit of transmigration, and the several ridiculous absurdities that result from this system. If, to avoid these difficulties, we assert that they will be reduced to nought, this annihilation must suppose that of the soul of man, since it is of the same essence with that of brutes; that there are not two sorts of spirituality; and that the supposition of one being less spiritual than another, implies no less a contradiction, than that of a substance, which, though extended, has neither breadth nor depth. But the instant we admit the spirituality of the human soul, 'tis not only repugnant to the opinion  
received

received in all religions, but also to the light of reason, to deprive it of immortality. The arguments brought to prove the destruction of the soul, are taken from its being supposed to be material in its essence; and its annihilation is only the total disorder or dissolution of the parts which composed it. But the instant we suppose it spiritual, this disorder cannot be admitted, since whatever is incorporeal cannot be divided.

It is impossible to conceive, how a spiritual substance should not subsist but in consequence of the existence of a corporeal substance. As the essence of both these substances is perfectly distinct, the destruction of the one must not cause the destruction of the other. Father Mallebranche is in the right to suppose, that, to effect this, an extraordinary power of the Deity would intervene; but his argument is of no force against such as suppose the soul to be material; because God having permitted certain particles of matter to be endued with thought, so long as they shall have a particular modification; when these atoms shall disunite, and cease to form that modification, they may be naturally supposed to lose their faculties, merely by our having recourse to the general order of things, and their first creation.

If we allow the intellectual principle of brutes to be spiritual, indivisible, and not to suffer any injury from the impulses of matter, we then must be forced, to prevent our being obliged to own that it is immortal as well as that of men, to have recourse to an extraordinary opinion; and assert, that God creates and annihilates, every instant, millions of substances of the second class of spirituality. Cannot God, will it be said, effect this if he pleases? I grant that he is able to do it; but 'tis absurd to lay down a system, whose only proof is an extraordinary power of the Deity; and to adopt an opinion that clashes with the notion we entertain of the essence of spirituality, and admits of principles an hundred times more puzzling than those attempted to be destroyed. For, abstracting from the difficulties



which arise from the very nature of the system, how many occur in the opinion which admits the spirituality of the human soul? With what doubts should we not sometimes be perplexed, if revelation and the sacred writings did not assure us of it? Can we easily comprehend, how it is possible for a being that has no extent, to act upon extension? and how, on the other hand, can an extended substance act upon a thing which has no parts? Is it not as easy to conceive, that God, by his almighty power, may bestow an understanding on certain atoms? These subjects, friend Isaac, may afford matter for eternal contests.

Enjoy thy health; and, without once disturbing thyself with any of these questions, live contented and happy.

### LETTER CLXXII.

The Aristotelian philosophy rejected in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.—Aristotle's philosophy has undergone great changes in the opinions of different men in different ages.—Aristotle pretended by some to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London——

**T**Here are in England, dear Isaac, two famous universities, the one at Oxford, and the other at Cambridge. The Aristotelian philosophy is entirely banished from both; and the professors read there, and explain to the pupils, the works of the sage Locke, and of the learned Sir Isaac Newton. These illustrious men now take the place of Aristotle, and his most famous commentators; the English having entirely shaken off the yoke of the scholastic and Peripatetic philosophers. They disengaged themselves much easier from their prejudices, than most of their neighbours, who endeavoured, during some time, to maintain the doctrines of Aristotle,

totle, by the aid of the magistrates, and the authority of the prince.

Nothing can more strongly evince the great lengths to which prejudices may be carried, than the disputes raised in the last century, in favour of the Peripatetic philosophy. The Nazarene priests would have had it considered with as much reverence, as the fundamental articles of their religion. Nevertheless, these very works of Aristotle, which they protect, were formerly sentenced to the flames by an assembly of Nazarene pontiffs\*; and the credit of the Greek philosopher has, at different times, been subject to the most fatal reverses of fortune. A Nazarene friar†, whose predominant passion was to be thought a prophet, exclaimed aloud, in the twelfth century, against Aristotle's metaphysics. He wrote circular letters to several prelates, (exhorting them to unite their zeal to his) to prevent, as he said, the evils which might accrue from opinions of the most dangerous tendency. But all his endeavours were fruitless. The Peripatetic sect swallowed up all the rest, and reigned as queen in all the schools. And now the commentators on Aristotle advanced the most ridiculous and chimerical opinions. They made chains, which served to no other purpose but to ensnare the minds of men, and keep them under the severe captivity of prejudices. Even the Mahommedans seemed to vie with the Nazarenes in bestowing the most extravagant encomiums upon it; and a person was no longer permitted to examine (whatsoever religion he might profess) whether a man who had, as others, but a soul and body, could be mistaken. The mustis and interpreters of the Koran wrested Mahommed's works, to make them square with those of Aristotle: And the friars took no less pain, to reconcile the doctrine of the Lycæum with that of the first Nazarene doctors. A French author‡, friend Isaac, informs

\* A council held in France under Philip Augustus.

† St. Bernard.

‡ Naude, Apologie pour les grands hommes faussement accusez de magic.

me, that Averroes used to say, "that nature was not entirely completed till Aristotle came into the world; That she received in him the finishing stroke, and the perfection of her being; that she cannot go farther; that this is the utmost exertion of her strength, and the limits of the human understanding."

This eulogium, how extravagant soever, is far less so than the theses maintained by the divines of Colen. They pretended that Aristotle was the fore-runner of the Messiah, whom the Nazarenes imagine to be already come, and whom we, expect as our deliverer. It must be confessed, dear Isaac, that so whimsical a supposition affords the faithful among the Israelites a fine subject for ridicule; and since our enemies have found out the secret to apply, to a heathen philosopher, all the qualities and prophecies which relate to the fore-runner of the Messiah; they may easily discover, in the passages of the scripture, any thing they may take it into their heads to justify, by virtue of the same authority. Thou wilt possibly imagine that I banter, when I assure thee, that some Nazarene divines have been so silly as to transform a philosopher, who was strongly suspected to be an atheist, into a fore-runner of the deity; but here follow Agrippa's words: "The divines of Colen have writ a book to prove the probability of Aristotle's salvation; and they did not scruple to advance that he had been the fore-runner of the Messiah, with respect to the mysteries of nature, as St. John Baptist had been with regard to the mysteries of Grace."

Are we to wonder, after this, dear Isaac, that certain pontiffs should have considered this Greek philosopher as one of the chief apostles of the Nazarene religion, whose works had furnished a subject for several articles of faith. However, they shew a sincerity in this; and how absurd soever it may be in men, to have acted in so injudicious a

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manner, 'tis plain that Aristotle has frequently been ranked among the fathers of the Nazarene church. Father Paul says this very pleasantly, and shews admirably well the ridicule of such an opinion †.

If we may give credit to a Jesuit, some Nazarenes did not proceed barely to veneration, but paid divine honours to Aristotle.; and put the categories of this philosopher into the hands of their children, by way of catechism. How dangerous soever so strong an instance of the extravagant prepossession, entertained in favour of the Peripatetic philosophy, might appear; it nevertheless has been adopted by the Ignatian society; and 'tis they, in this age, who support and protect it, against the violent attacks it daily meets with. The Jesuits, indeed, have not set up any images of Aristotle in their churches; but then, it would be a great pleasure to them to instal him in the number of the fathers of the church; and to put him in the room of St. Austin, whose writings have long been under their displeasure. One would even conclude, that they had been labouring, these many years, to bring that project about. Their first attempt, in order to prevent certain tempers, who easily take fire, from giving the alarm, was, to suppose the damnation of Aristotle to be a matter altogether doubtful. But afterwards they went a little farther, and approved of those who believe, that 'tis probable Aristotle was received into the regions of glory and felicity\*. Thus far matters went on very smoothly: But, unhappily for the society, the face of things changed on a sudden; and that bondage, which hood-winked mankind has been partly taken

† In che haveva una gran parte Aristotle coll'd haver di-  
into esattamente tutti generi di cause, a cui se egli non se  
se adoperato, noi mancaremo di molti articoli di fede.  
ra-paolo, Hittor. del Concilio Tridentino, Lib. ii.  
age 234.

\* Grotius de variis cœl. Luth. Cap. xiii. see the fifth  
art or a Letter in the Memoires de la Republique de  
ters,



off, by some illustrious literati in these latter ages. This obliged them to lay aside entirely the canonization of Aristotle; and all they have been able to do was, to assert the justness of his opinions; to raise the Peripatetic philosophy to the skies, and leave the author of it in the infernal regions.

Notwithstanding all the endeavours which the divines used, to stop the progress of the new philosophy, yet, as its glory increased daily, the Sorbonne thought of a whimsical expedient, above an hundred years since, to check its course. They addressed the parliament of Paris; and, upon their remonstrances, an arret came out against the chemists, the purport whereof was, "that who-  
"soever attacked the opinions of Aristotle attack-  
"ed at the same time the school divinity re-  
"ved in the church\*." What an excellent decision, dear Isaac, was this! Methinks it would be equally judicious to assert; that no Frenchman, of what rank or condition soever, ought to make use of his reason; it not being just that any particular person should be in his senses, since all the schoolmen are fools. This ridiculous arret or decree, the result of ignorance and prejudice, was yet far from being the most violent one passed in France, in opposition to the dictates of good sense. Among a great number of others, here follows one, that will always be considered as very singular by posterity. "In the year one thousand six hun-  
"dred and twenty-six, the parliament of Paris  
"banished out of their jurisdiction three men, who  
"were for asserting, publicly, several theses in  
"opposition to Aristotle's doctrine: And for-  
"bid all persons to publish, sell or distribute the  
"propositions contained in those theses, upon pain  
"of corporal punishment; and to teach or incul-  
"cate any maxims that clashed with such an-  
"ent authors as were approved, upon pain of

\* Rapin, Comparaison de Platon & d'Aristote, page 413.  
"death

"death†." After such an arret, what may we not expect, dear Isaac, from the prejudices of mankind? Had not a famous poet of the present age reason to say, "that whosoever dissents ever so little from the opinions of the ancients, is thought to be guilty of a most horrid attempt; and stirs up, against an inconsiderate modern, all that idolatrous region, where nothing is wanting, in the worship there paid to the ancients, but priests and victims ‡?" Is it not whimsical enough, to see the members of the parliament of Paris set themselves up as inquisitors in behalf of Aristotle; and favour his opinions as much as the Dominicans in Spain do those of Thomas Aquinas? When we are told, that the chief tribunal of a mighty kingdom sentenced to death any person, who should presume to point out one single error in the ancient authors; can it be thought strange, that the Turks should employ the scimiter and gun to spread their religion, and increase the votaries of the Koran? The illustrious Sir Francis Bacon, who first dared, amidst the gloom of the school-philosophy, to endeavour to light himself with the torch held out by truth, was persuaded of the conformity found between the Aristotelians and Peripatetics. He was of opinion that both had equally established their doctrines by force and prejudice\*.

† Mercure Francois, Tome x. page 504.

‡ Crebillon, preface to his tragedy of *Electra*.

\* Quod ad placita antiquorum philosophorum qualia fuerunt Pythagoræ, Philolai, Xenophanis, Anaxagoræ, Parmenidis, Leucippi, Democriti, & aliorum, (quæ homines contemptum percurrere solent,) non abs re fuerit paulo modestius in ea culos, conjicere. Etsi enim Aristoteles, more Ottomannorum, regnare se haud tuto posse, nisi fratres suos omnes contrucisset, tamen iis, qui non regnum aut magisterium, sed varietatis inquisitionem atque illustrationem sibi proponunt, non potest non videri res utilis, diversas diversorum, circa rerum naturam, opiniones sub uno aspectu intueri. Bacon. de Augmentis Scientiar. Lib. iii. page 88. col. 2. Edit. Lips. Johan. Gualt. Erythropili.

Thou very possibly, worthy Isaac, may'st have a curiosity to know, what could have inclined the greatest part of the divines, especially the schoolmen, to adhere so strongly to Aristotle. And as the obstinacy of his followers still continues, though truth has pierced through the cloud that concealed it, thou wilt not be displeased at my acquainting thee with some of the chief reasons that give such great vogue to the Peripatetic philosophy, and endears it so much to the Jesuits. The chief docton among the Protestants inveighed very strongly against the authority Aristotle had acquired: They charged him with holding part of the erroneous opinions they opposed; and complained, that men suffered themselves to be prejudiced by vain subtleties, which served to no other purpose than to mislead the human mind, and prevent its getting sight of truth. This circumstance was sufficient to make the school-philosophy sacred to all their adversaries, who give out, that the only reason why they attacked Aristotle was, because his works furnished such arguments as prove the errors of the Protestants, and silenced them at once. This opinion has prevailed ever since, and in all probability hatred will perpetuate it; since in the late age, spite of the learned discoveries of Descartes, Gassendi, Locke, Newton, and other immortal geniuses, this has not been able to prevent certain persons, who have acquired the reputation of wits, from publishing heaps of impertinence. Among the writers hinted at, we may, nay we ought to give a distinguished place to father Rapin, who under the title of Reflections on Philosophy, published one of the most absurd books ever written on philosophical subjects. This simple man thought proper, in the work in question, to out-do his usual out-doings; and to advance a great many silly particulars, still more trifling than those asserted by him in another place, wherein, after bestowing the most extravagant encomiums upon the most wretched poet among the French, he quotes, as an example

example of the sublime, one of the worst passages in the poet in question.

The extravagant encomiums, friend Isaac, that have been bestowed on the scholastic and Peripatetic philosophy, make it still more contemptible in the eyes of such exalted genius's, as make use of their knowledge and understanding, and judge of all things without partiality. For, if the several divines who assert this philosophy, would content themselves only with saying, that Aristotle was master of a great genius; this truth, which is allowed by persons of true learning, would be granted them. And indeed this Greek philosopher examined certain questions with the utmost clearness and accuracy, and in such a manner as proved him a great master. There are excellent things in his poeticks and his rhetoric. But there are very great faults in his philosophy in general; but when a person will adopt the several errors of it, and endeavour to pass them off as useful and necessary truths, the people in question make others approve of the reproaches which have been cast upon it, and they cannot forbear crying out with a German divine: "Ought we to give the name of philosophy to a rhapsody of precepts, which teach us only to argue after a random manner, and without the least knowledge of the matters we are speaking upon; precepts, which teach us only to pronounce, in a very emphatic tone of voice, the words Vacuum, Place, Time, Motion and Infinite; which are of no use; and only give rise to disputes, that make persons less knowing than they were before.\*"

We are forced, dear Isaac, to assent to the truth advanced in the above remarks. All the complaints and elogiums of father Rapin meet with almost as few partisans among persons of good sense, as the *Memoirs of Trevoux* do readers among those of taste, who are lovers of truth. 'Tis to no purpose for this Jesuit to assert, That nothing

\* Grotseri Inaugurat. Doctor. page 43.



did more honour to the doctrine of Aristotle, that noble philosopher, than the sharp invectives of Luther, Melancthon, Bucher, &c. † “ Do not waste your spirits, may it be said to him, in inveighing against those divines. We will allow, if you will, that they are mistaken in the opinions which relate to controversial disputes ; but as, in those things relating to the Peripatetic philosophy, the council of Trent did not pronounce that Aristotle was infallible, you will permit us to condemn his errors, and not approve them, only because your adversaries condemn them ; though you should declare us to be heretics, or, which is still worse, Jansenists. Good sense, reason, and the light of nature, unanimously conspire to make us have a strong desire to get acquainted with the modern discoveries for which we are obliged to the philosophers of the late and present age. You may, if you please, continue to amuse yourself with the chimeras of the schoolmen ; may fill your mind with substantial forms, beings of reason, and categories ; and may invent a barbarous set of terms, which throw the deepest gloom and confusion over those matters, in which some glimmerings of light remained ; but we shall be far from imitating your example. On the contrary, we will endeavour to strike into a path quite opposite to yours ; and will even assert, that a Des Cartes and Newton have done as much service to mankind, as the schoolmen have done prejudice to them.”

It were to be wished, friend Isaac, that all the Nazarenes would address their divines in these or such like words. They possibly might root out all their prejudices ; whereby we should at last see good sense entirely freed from the oppression under which it has so long groaned.

Enjoy thy health, excellent Isaac ; and be thy days contented and propitious.

† Rapin, Comparaison de Platon & d'Aristote, page 142.

## LETTER CLXXVIII.

Many heroes of antiquity whose praises are greatly founded by the trumpet of fame, possessed, notwithstanding, many vices.—Illustrated by some anecdotes from the histories of Henry IV. and Lewis XIV.—A story of Amurath, a bey of Tunis.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Tripoli.—

**I**N my last letter, dear Monceca, I observed to thee the conformity which is sometimes found in nations, whose manners and customs, at first view, seem most different. I shall now communicate to thee another opinion, which appears to me no less probable than the former. I am of opinion that we may compare, in many things, the most vicious men, not to those of the most virtuous conduct, but to such as have acquired the most exalted reputation. This is a manifest proof that true merit has not solely determined, with regard to the praises that have been lavished on many persons, who often, though born for the destruction of mankind, had yet the title of hero bestowed upon them. It will be to no purpose to attempt a parallel between Socrates and Nero: But if, on the contrary, we should compare Nero with such princes as have made the greatest figure in the world; and who are considered as the mightiest and most illustrious monarchs, it will appear he had several bad qualities which were common to those princes, but did not shine forth; or that did not incur the displeasure of mankind, because they were compensated by a considerable number of virtues.

Augustus, in the beginning of his reign, committed as many murders as Nero did, at the close of his. Julius Cæsar and Sylla did not murder their mothers; but then they thrust a dagger into the heart of their country. They trampled upon its liberties, divested their fellow-citizens of their

Possessions, and butchered great numbers of them. The battle of Pharsalia, only, was more fatal to the Romans than all Nero's cruelties. By the way, dear Monceca, 'tis not only among heathen princes that many of Nero's qualities are found; all the most illustrious heroes among the Nazarenes have had some things in common with the most vicious princes.

Henry IV. the delight of mankind, and the model for other sovereigns to copy after; a monarch born to form the felicity of his subjects, was secretly jealous of the glory attained by those chiefs who fought under him. He would even sometimes be very much displeased at their success; and was no less exasperated at the praises which were bestowed upon them, than Tiberius was at those which such persons obtained, as distinguished themselves in the administration. The sole difference there was between the jealousy of those princes is, the former possessed too great a fund of virtue, to let it appear openly; and the latter followed, without the least restraint, the cruel dictates which it inspired. But notwithstanding all the exalted qualities possessed by Henry IV. yet his vanity would every now and then break the chain with which he attempted to bind it. This prince was greatly displeased at marshal Biron, for expatiating on the victories he had gained, "He has been a good officer, would the king say; but then he must own that I saved his life three times. I rescued him from the enemy at Fontaine-Francoise; on which occasion he was so terribly wounded, that as I had acted the part of a common soldier in saving him, I performed the duties of a marshal in the retreat; he declaring, that he was not able to do any thing upon that occasion."

The author, dear Monceca, from whom I copied this passage, gives us another that denotes still more plainly the jealousy Henry IV. entertained against this marshal; and which would make one conjecture, that the danger to which Henry exposed himself in saving the marshal's life, was the effect

effect of vanity rather than of true friendship. "At the battle of Fontaine-Francoise, says the writer in question, the king rescued marshal Biron, in the midst of the fuziliers, who were firing upon him. One of his majesty's servants said to him, that he exposed himself too much to danger, in thus plunging inconsiderately into the midst of the enemies. You say true, replied the king; but should I not do it, and keep back, marshal Biron will glory in this so long as he lives\*." True glory, excellent Monceca, does not think of what those persons will say, in whose favour we act; it consults itself only; and performs an action from no other motives than that it thinks it a duty.

Henry IV. is not the only Nazarene hero, who had certain imperfections which bear a perfect resemblance to some of those of Nero. Lewis XIV. that great prince, whom his very enemies are forced to applaud; who was always extremely tender of his subjects lives; and, during the very long reign he enjoyed, put to death but one criminal of distinction†, had certain foibles that bore a still greater resemblance than those of Henry IV. to the vices of the Roman emperor. He loved, like that monarch, to shew himself in public diversions, and permitted divine honours to be paid him. The Romans never flattered their emperors more than the French did their grand monarque. One cannot read, without being seized with a surprize mixed with indignation, the prologues of the opera's sung in presence of that prince, and so often repeated before the whole world. What more extravagant expressions could have been employed by the heathens, when they ranked them among the gods, than those which occur so frequently in Quinaut's works? "He is worthy of altars.—His thunder strikes terror, even at the time when he is unactive, &c."

\* Matthieu, Histoire de la Paix, Livr. iv. p. 286.

† The chevalier de Rohan.



I am sensible, dear Monceca, that Lewis XIV. merited applause on a variety of accounts: But then I likewise know, that he should not have been equalled to the Deity; and that his passion for applause was extreme. A nobleman of his court †, presumed to tell him his sincere thoughts with regard to so illaudable a weakness: For this prince, happening to ask his opinion about a new opera: Sir, replied the nobleman, "I believe your majesty deserves the elogiums bestowed upon you; but I wonder you will permit them to be sung by a company of knaves; and that your subjects should be told of your virtues only in the temple of vice and debauchery."

You perhaps, worthy Monceca, will scarce be able to believe what I am going to observe, and yet it is matter of fact: The miserable prologues in question, interlarded with such extravagant and illaudable encomiums, mortified very justly Lewis XIV. and the whole French nation afterwards. A German prince could not forbear saying, maliciously indeed, to a French prisoner, after the battle of Hochstet; do the French, sir, still continue to write opera-prologues?

Since we meet in Henry IV. and Lewis XIV. certain particulars in which they may be compared to Tiberius and Nero, whose only virtue was their politics; judge whether it would be difficult to discover in all monarchs, how exalted soever their fame may be, certain imperfections found in the characteristics of bad princes. It must be confessed, that the reputation of philosophers only will stand the severest tests. In enquiring into Socrates's life, if we perceive that this great man was not entirely free from faults, they yet will be found so inconsiderable, that they will not bear, in any manner, a parallel with those of persons whose vices have astonished the world. The more I examine the character of Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, Epictetus, &c. the more I find them contrary even

† Duke de Montausier.

in the most minute particulars, to that of Tiberius and Nero.

What glory, excellent Monceca, does this diffuse over philosophy! It tears up even the most inconsiderable roots of guilt, cleanses the soul, and renders it worthy so noble a guest as philosophy. It produces what neither the love of glory, vanity, nor a thirst of praise can atchieve. In fine, it forms perfect heroes; whereas the ambition of being esteemed by men raises the human mind only to a certain point; but does not entirely eradicate its weaknesses. This truth may be proved in a very sensible manner. To be convinced of it, we need but reflect, that the love of acquiring a mighty name, formed Henry III. Lewis XIV. William III. Sixtus V. and such like; and that the study of wisdom produced a Socrates, Locke, Gassendi, &c.

If mankind, dear Monceca, knew the great advantages which would accrue to them, in case they would reflect seriously and regularly on their conduct, the greatest part would devote themselves to philosophy. The love of happiness and tranquility, so natural to the human mind, would prompt them to this; and whenever they resolved to act agreeably to the dictates of prudence, they would easily gratify all their desires; at least it would not be difficult for them to find out which are the faults they ought to avoid, and the virtues they ought to practise. "Nature has endued all nations, how barbarous soever, with the faculty and means of distinguishing what is honest and useful, from what is ignominious and hurtful\*." If they do not make use of this advantage, and seem to have no idea of it, it is owing to their mind's being clouded by prejudices and

\* At qui nos Legem bonam a mala, nulla alia nisi Naturæ Norrea, dividere possumus. Nec solum jus & injuria a natura judicatur, sed omnino honesta ac turpia. Nam & communis intelligentia nobis notas res efficit, easque in animis nostris inchoavit, ut in honesta virtute ponantur, in vitiis turpia. Cicero de legibus, lib. i. fol. 331.

passions, which prevent its acting with freedom. We meet with some footsteps of these ideas of justice in persons of the most cruel dispositions, and brought up in the most barbarous countries. I was told several particulars, during my stay in Tunis, relating to a bey who reigned not long since in that city. This prince at his accession to the throne, seemed not possessed of one single virtue, and to be entirely ignorant of the qualities essential to a human creature. Nevertheless, amidst his greatest follies, some traces of friendship, of liberality, and even greatness of soul were discovered. Thou thyself may'st form a judgment of this from some things I will here relate.

The name of this bey was Amurath, who possessed himself of the throne by murdering his uncle. He was surprizingly barbarous; but his riotous excesses surpassed even his cruelty. He imitated the conduct of certain Nazarenes, who are for ever studying how to invent dishes that might best satiate their luxuriously-voracious appetites. One night, after having drunk very copiously, he went into one of the prisons of the Nazarene slaves. These poor unhappy wretches were greatly surprized to see their sovereign come to pay them a visit, and especially at such an hour. Knowing that he was drunk, they imagined that he was desirous of diverting himself with cutting some heads off; but their fears were groundless. Amurath, so far from entertaining thoughts of putting any of the slaves to death, thought proper to eat and drink in their prison. Accordingly, he commanded them to get ready an entertainment; and not thinking their wine good enough, he sent two of his regalers to fetch some from the French consul's, who furnished the slaves with the wine with which they entertained their prince. Amurath drank with them till day-break; when his good-humour increasing with the wine, he resolved to divert himself with some renegadoes, his attendants, who

had caroused with him. "You are a parcel of villains, says he to them, who have denied your God; and I esteem infinitely more than I do you those poor slaves, who, spite of the torments they suffer, are yet faithful to him. But I will reconcile you to your first master; an obligation you must owe to me." Then taking up a cross, he obliged them all to kneel down, and kiss it. This reconciliation was not sufficient to satisfy his zeal; for, after performing the pastoral office, he likewise discharged that of a sacrificer, by striking off some of their heads. He then performed the office of chaplain, by commanding these poor slaves to fall upon their knees, before one of the altars set up in a corner of the prison, and to say their usual prayers. They obeyed his commands; but one of them not appearing so devout as Amurath would have had him, he gave him a box o'th' ear, saying, "rascal, when a person is before an altar, he ought to offer up his prayers to God with reverence."

Here, dear Monceca, you have a picture of Amurath's extravagancies; and one would not expect that Amurath, after acting in so irrational a manner, could have shewn the generosity he did at his leaving the prison. "It would be unjust, says he, in me to divert myself with these poor slaves, who are but too unhappy already, by the ill treatment they have met with from fortune. I therefore, added he, will give them an hundred pieces of eight, to pay for the wine they treated me with; and an hundred more to repair the chapel before which I obliged them to offer up prayers to God."

Am I in the wrong, dear Monceca, to assert, that we perceive in the most barbarous nations, some glimmerings of the knowledge which all men naturally possess of the moral virtues, they have acquired when come to years of discretion? These ideas are not innate in them, as certain philosophers pretend; but present themselves spontaneously as it were; and are suggested whenever the



the mind makes the least reflection on what passes in itself.

Amurath above-mentioned, furnishes me with another example to enforce my opinion. This barbarous prince had obliged a young Neapolitan, by clapping a pistol to his breast, to abjure the Christian religion; after which he had appointed him his casnader, and heaped great riches upon him. However, these mighty favours had not been able to win the heart of this Italian, who would not have quitted his religion, had he not been menaced with death; and accordingly he fled some time after. The news of this plunged Amurath into the deepest affliction; and fearing that his favourite, who was the guardian of all his treasures, had carried them off; he ran and visited his coffers, but found every thing safe. He was struck with the honesty of the Italian; and it raised in him impulses he had never felt before. His anger then made way for grief; and being unwilling to be out-done in generosity and greatness of soul, he sent back into Europe the slave who used to wait upon his fugitive favourite, and restored him to his liberty; upon condition that he should put into his hands two very fine horses, which he ordered to be brought out of his own stable; and sent him as a testimony of his esteem and friendship.

To these laudable instances of generosity he soon added others of a ridiculous and extravagant kind; and soon reverted to his first dictates. He one day was for ordering all the Nazarene merchants to receive the bastinado, and particularly an Italian goldsmith, merely because one of his minions had fled. He pretended that the Franks had corrupted him, and furnished him with an opportunity of making his escape. He even suspected the Italian merchant had still more criminal designs in view; and if luckily for him, Cidi Hamet had not been caught, the poor goldsmith would have received five hundred blows, pursuant to his sentence, without having committed any other crime than his be-  
ing

ing a native of Italy. This barbarous prince could not conceive it possible, that one who was an Italian could once see his dear Cidi Hamet, without feeling certain emotions. It was upon the same supposition that he was going to inflict the like punishment, as that to which the goldsmith was sentenced, on three Neapolitan monks, who under the protection of France, had devoted themselves to the service of captives.

Enjoy thy health, good Monceca; may'st thou lead a contented and happy life; and never be subject to the capricious will of a cruel man.

## L E T T E R. CLXXIV.

The English language has undergone great changes, with regard to diction, within a few centuries.—

The pretended advantage of polishing languages in general, will in time deprive readers of the pleasure of understanding the greatest beauties of many valuable authors.—Critical remarks on some French writers.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

THE language which the English, dear Isaac, speak at this time, differs greatly from that spoke by their ancestors. The English is changed almost as much as the French; and those who, some centuries since, were considered as the standards of fine writing, are as utterly despised, with regard to the diction. This difference, indeed, between the ancient and modern writers, is much more sensible among the French than the English. With the former, certain authors who flourished under Lewis XIII. are now looked upon as obsolete, and their style is totally condemned. Montaigne's essays must be very excellent in themselves, otherwise his phraseology could not have pleased in this age. Spite of the beauty and ease of his style, yet most readers would have been disgusted at the worn-out

worn-out expressions, and obsolete terms with which his writings abound.

I don't know, friend Isaac, whether the pretended beauties that are daily added to the living languages, and which are said to contribute to their perfection, are not prejudicial to polite literature. It is certain, that the alterations made in languages cause several excellent authors to fall into oblivion, and consequently to be seldom or ever read. In case there should happen, two hundred years hence, as great a revolution in the French tongue, as has been found since the reign of Henry II. what will become of the works of Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Moliere, la Fontaine, &c? These will meet with the same fate as those of Ronsard, and several others. Some learned men would peep into them, and endeavour, through the obscurity of the diction, to discover the beauty in the thoughts of those illustrious authors. But what a prejudice would it be to the whole world, not to be able to perceive all the beauties contained in the most perfect works the human mind ever gave birth to? How unhappy would it be for the French, living at that time, to find the diction of Mithridates and Phædra as harsh and inharmonious as that of Pyramus and Thisbe \*? This is a truth, dear Isaac, which all the learned, whose labours are calculated for the good of the public, ought to have for ever present to their minds; and it would shew the highest judgment in them, to oppose all the innovations which may be attempted to be introduced. For it is for the interest of literature, that they shew a zeal for the writings of the age of Lewis XIV. they being the true models of the French tongue.

Thou knowest, friend Isaac, that some petty authors, or rather wretched scriblers, finding themselves unable ever to acquire any fame, so long as the public shall be possessed of the excellent works of Corneille, Racine, Moliere, la Bruyere, Patru, Boileau, and several others, endeavour to

\* A Tragedy by Theophile.

introduce a new species of writing; and to substitute, instead of vigorous beauties of those great writers, glittering false thoughts, and an inflated style, worthy of those affected females,

Whom Moliere with a single stroke cut down\*.

But if good writers do not oppose the bad taste, the French will revert, insensibly, to that barbarous state, from which it was so extremely difficult for them to recover. Many begin already to be dazzled by the affected phrases of a most ridiculous kind; and, a surprizing circumstance is, some authors who in other respects, deserve the esteem of all good judges, have been so weak as sometimes to write in this new, affected manner. To make themselves fashionable, they have brought an odium on their works, and tarnished the just reputation they had before acquired. The example they set had so pernicious a tendency, that able writers are alarmed, and have been sensible that it might cause the greatest confusion in literature. A famous author has inveighed strongly against these innovations. "One of our best authors†, says, he‡, has lately split on the same rock; and and very much lessened the merit of one of his works, by interlarding it with such unusual expressions. Every one knows how he was laughed at, for calling a sun-dial, a solar register; a bird-seller, a trader in warblings; a fruit of an extraordinary size, a garden phenomenon; a moralizing fox, a long-tailed Pythagoras; the uneasinesses in marriage, the tid-bits of the hymeneal state, &c. The writers of the present age have justly exclaimed against such odd expressions; and consider them as the dregs of that trifling jargon, which, by the raillery

\* Boileau, Satyr X.

† De la Motte, in his Fables.

‡ Maffieu, Préface des Oeuvres de Tournell, Tom. I.

page 40.



“ levelled at them in a comedy \*, had been banished France; and it was thought, that the authors of these expressions intended to throw us back to the period in which the two heroines of Moliere used to call chairs, the conveniences of conversation; and a looking-glass, the counsellor of the graces.”

Yet this smart and judicious censure has not, excellent Isaac; put a stop to the currency of a new language, in which reason and good taste were no ways concerned. A great number of pitiful authors are now ambitious of stuffing their works with forced affected words, and falsely refined, fustian phrases. One would imagine that they had formed a resolution utterly to destroy their native tongue. Not contented with introducing numberless trifling phrases which enervate it, they also presume to exclaim against such as declare for the ancient manner. To believe them, Corneille is harsh, Racine has too much simplicity, Boileau is jejune, Vaugelas incorrect, Patru and Bourdaloue too uniform. They repeat so very often these impertinent reproaches, that they at last win over a great number of wits, who are unhappily misled by their affected antitheses, their broken far-fetched phrases, and their forced sallies; in comparison of which, the tinsel Concetti of the Italians may be looked upon as genuine beauties. The women and foplings, who both are great lovers of innovations, perfectly espouse all unnatural, high-flown expressions; and, unhappily for polite literature, according to half the people who read books, 'tis with works of wit as with gowns and head-dresses, those in the newest fashion are always preferred, such especially as discover an air of singularity. If madam de Villegieu was now living, and would publish her Exiles of Augustus's Court, a delightful book dictated by the muses, I know not whether it would be well received by the public. Perhaps it would pass as writ with too great simplicity.

\* Les Precieuses ridicules.

city; for the French, for some years last past, have been regaled with beauties that were altogether unnatural; and they delight in false thoughts, expressed in almost an unintelligible manner.

If this odd taste should continue to prevail so much among us, what a pitiful language will the French transmit to posterity; and what sort of writers will they propose to it as the models of perfection? Instead of Racine they will give them Mouhy; and Marivaux instead of Corneille. Should this be the case, I pity them heartily, as well as polite literature. I before, friend Isaac\*, presented thee with a slight character of this Marivaux: He is one of the chief of the innovators. He does not, perhaps, want wit, and even seems to be a man of reflection; but his good qualities are quite eclipsed by his manner of expression. He can never prevail with himself to express the most simple things with simplicity. Whenever a person, in any of his works, desires to bid another good morrow, such a person will employ some far-fetched phrase, and affect to introduce the most refined wit in this common compliment. This writer will employ three or four pages in describing a false devotee; and after we have read it, we are surprized to find we have learned nothing, except that she endeavoured to conceal her years, by the gaiety of her dress. Among the vast variety of phrases, where the thought is set in an hundred different lights, here follow some, by which thou may'st form a judgment of his diction. "This woman always appeared in a modest dress; in such a manner, however, as did not eclipse any of her native charms. A woman might dress in this manner in the view of pleasing, without being accused of aiming to please. I say, a woman who was a coquet in her heart; for she must be such, in order to aim at conquests by that sort of dress. There were some little concealed

\* Letter XIII.

“ springs, to make her as graceful as decent; and  
 “ perhaps more killing than the most studied dress.  
 “ Two things I mean were her fine hands and her  
 “ pretty arms, under plain linnen; this set off their  
 “ beauty, and made them strike the more, &c.\*”  
 This affected style, good Isaac, and these far-fetched  
 phrases are far from being true beauties. The mind,  
 when directed by good taste, expresses itself in a  
 more easy and natural manner. These, however,  
 are not the most affected strokes in the picture in  
 question; here follow some that are still more so.  
 “ To come to her face. At the first sight of the  
 “ person thus drest we should have said to ourselves,  
 “ There must be a grave staid woman. At the se-  
 “ cond glance, There’s a woman has acquired that  
 “ air of wisdom and probity. But this was far  
 “ from being her character: At the third glance,  
 “ we suspected her being a very witty woman; and  
 “ this conjecture was just.” Can any thing, dear  
 Isaac, be so burlesque as these first, second, and  
 third glances, each of which becomes something;  
 and the particle there, so industriously repeated to  
 no purpose? Would one not imagine, that such a  
 phraseology was copied from that of a poet whom  
 Moliere has so happily ridiculed, in his *Misanthrope*?  
 And are they not in the same strain with the follow-  
 ing verses, so often repeated in the *Female Pedant*  
 of that comic writer?

When thou hear’st that coach was prais’d,  
 Where gold on gold so high is rais’d,

Say not, that ’tis gay Amasent’s,  
 But, the blest product of my rents.

How ridiculous soever, dear Isaac, the passage  
 may be which I have censured, it yet has been high-  
 ly applauded by some people. Certain Journalists  
 have quoted it as a capital stroke. “ A writer, say

\* Marivaux, *Paifanne parvenue*.

“ they,

“ they, must have a great knowledge of the world, “ to describe so fully a character so very difficult to “ hit; and not a little art, to have discovered and “ drawn it in such agreeable colours\*.” What opinion will you entertain, worthy Isaac, of the taste and knowledge of such critics, who in their eulogium of a book, pitch upon the most trifling passage in it, as a specimen of its beauties; and who, setting up themselves as supreme judges of works of wit, are so silly as to approve such touches, as are most repugnant to good sense, and most capable of corrupting it? If it was a custom, in the Republic of Letters, to punish such writers as publish unjust decisions, how severely do the Journalists † in question deserve to be chastised? They ought to be so the more rigorously, as it is very common with them to publish reflections equally false and ridiculous as that above cited. They take a great pleasure in applauding every thing in a bombast strain. Here follows a second example of this. In the extract given by them of the *Entretiens Physiques, or Philosophical Conversations*, by Regnault the Jesuit, they have

\* Journal Litteraire, Tom. xxii. p. 463.

† The Literary Journal, certain parts of which are still printed at different intervals, was first writ by some gentlemen of equal learning and probity. But in June 1732, the right of the copy being given up to another bookseller, the persons who were concerned till then in the work in question, did not care to continue it for him; upon which that bookseller employed, in their stead, two or three wretched scribblers. The two apostate monks who published the odious continuation of Rapin's excellent history of England, were the principal authors of that pitiful journal. At this time the apostate Jesuit is the only person who draws up the chief extracts. He writes with the same spirit, and in the same taste with his quondam brethren. And indeed it may be affirmed, that this Literary Journal is as shocking as that of Trevoux, for the impudence and falshood discovered in every part of it. The public despised this contemptible journal; by which means it has lost all its credit, so that the bookseller sometimes lets whole years pass away, without printing any part of it.



praised this book to the skies, the absurdities of which I shall one day point out to thee §. Not contented with saying, that this author "is a genius of the first magnitude, who was a thorough master of ancient and modern physics;" they even applaud his diction, compared to which, that of Marivaux is simple and natural. They did not stop here; for to make the elogium they bestowed still more suitable to the book taken in hand by them, they made use of far-fetched expressions, and phrases in the new mode. "Nothing can be sweeter," say they, and more delicate than the first letter.\* But how admirably do the words sweeter and delicate suit a book, especially a philosophical treatise. Till now it was thought, that it was usual to say, a peruke that sits well, and a pretty little dog; but people are greatly mistaken, they ought to say, a peruke filled with excellent particulars; a dog writes in a delicate style; and a pretty sweet book.

But now comes the passage of Regnault which gave occasion to the many charming things said by the Journalists. I am persuaded they will not displease thee. "Whenever any cloud, says he, takes from our eyes, in the night, the azure sky, interspersed with stars, it is merely to vary our pleasures. The atmosphere then displays its phenomena. One would sometimes imagine, that Aurora, was going to appear even in the evening. Sometimes the thunder roars; but as thunder is dreaded but an instant, and that naturalists are able to discover that formidable instant, this noise, which spreads terror around, is no ways formidable to them. WHAT DO I SAY? The fantastical play of the thunder is an agreeable amusement to those who take notice of it." Such is the passage in the Jesuit, and here follows the sage reflection made by

§ See the VIIIth Letter or Part of the Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters.

\* Journal Litteraire, Tom. xxiii. p. 222.

the Journalists. Did ever Rohault, Paschal, Kircher, Descartes, Diogenes Laertius, or Aristotle, express themselves in such agreeable terms? No, indeed, worthy Isaac; Descartes never scribbled such fustian. He had too much good sense, to fill whole pages with a rhapsody of words that imply nothing, at least that are altogether useless. That azure sky, interspersed with stars, images that had been worn thread-bare these ten centuries, and that misplaced exclamation, WHAT DO I SAY? would have been considered, by him, as affected expressions, and childish strokes, unworthy a good writer, and particularly a philosopher. Must not a writer be out of his senses, nay, be lost to all shame, to venture to put this vicious diction in parallel with that of Paschal? What may we not expect from writers whose taste is so fantastical and corrupted?

Had not a judicious author of this age reason to cry out: "To what excesses will not writers proceed in this age! They not only endeavour to deprive us of those noble models which the ancients have left us; but they also would turn away our steps from those safe paths which some excellent moderns have chalked out to us within these fifty years. People begin to think that their works are too much neglected. Writers now leave the natural beauties which was the sole object of their care; and are studious of nothing but far-fetched ornaments. They deviate from their periodical, harmonious style, to give into a dis-jointed phraseology, that is altogether unmusical. In place of the happy irregularities which they used to leave designedly in their compositions; and which, in reality, give great energy and fire to a piece of writing; they substitute a dull exactness, which only enervates, and takes off from the rapidity of the diction.—Now, nothing is sought after but wit; and pieces are now composed of as many smart strokes as words. An ode is merely a string of epigrams methodically digested;

“ed; and a preface is a rhapsody of far-fetched reflections\*.”

This passage, dear Isaac, all the French ought to have perpetually before their eyes. Happy would it be for them if they would learn it by heart; and still more so, if they would observe the precepts inculcated in it: Then that inflated, that ridiculous style, which certain authors have, within these few years, endeavoured to bring into vogue, would soon be exploded. The English seem to me very far from delighting in such false beauties; and would never pretend to put Locke’s masculine, majestic style in parallel with that of a writer such as Regnault the Jesuit. If any Journalist among them was so ignorant, or so fantastical, as to speak in favour of so ridiculous a way of writing, both the author and his panegyrist would be equally laughed at.

Enjoy thy health, friend Isaac, live contented and happy; and never let insipid compositions bribe thy applause.

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### LETTER CLXXV.

The folly of paying lavish encomiums on great men after their decease and not allowing due praise to eminent persons while living, exposed.—Some instances quoted suitable to the occasions.—Two remarkable passages shewing the extraordinary generosity of the chevalier Bayard, and a German cardinal.

### AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London——

**I** Sometimes reflect, friend Isaac, on the injustice of men, who can scarce be prevailed upon to bestow, on eminent persons, when living, the praises they so lavishly heap on those who died some centuries ago. Envy is a disease, or rather a pest,

\* Maffieu, Preface des Oeuvres de Tournell, Tom. i. p. 40. which

which spreads its venom into every heart, and easily shifts from the great to the vulgar, and from the vulgar to the great. Tho' one would imagine, that no jealousy could possibly arise between persons set at a great distance one from the other, by birth, condition, employment, and character, and even country; nevertheless, self-love, which is found in every mind, raises up, against conspicuous personages, invidious men in all nations. People seem displeased to see a man, in his life-time, endeavour to attract, by his virtues, his talents, and his merit, a sort of veneration, which, by raising him, humbles those who are forced to pay him honour.

The glory of a living hero is an eye-sore to such as are witnesses of it. However, no sooner is this hero numbered among the dead, but people are for doing him justice; and the day of his death they are willing to make the first for praising him. Perhaps too envy may have a considerable share in the applauses which are bestowed upon him; and that the only motive why people cry up his actions and exalted qualities is, to have the malicious pleasure of lessening those of some other living hero.

How many writers drew up the elogiums of Lewis XIII. and Henry IV. Kings of France, in no other view but to oppose it to that of Lewis XIV. I was assured, when in France, by chevalier de Maisin, that he knew an old officer, who, on all occasions, affected to applaud, in the most extravagant terms, marshal Turenne, in presence of marshal Villars; and that he would expatiate chiefly on the generosity and disinterested temper of the former. But these encomiums were dictated by envy and jealousy, rather than by a desire of doing justice to the merit of the great general in question. And yet marshal Villars, though not so generous as some other commanders, nevertheless equalled the glory of the greatest and most fortunate of them. His virtues indeed were sometimes clouded by the love he bore to money; and yet,



yet, though he himself was sensible how illaudable such a passion is, he suffered himself to be hurried away by his natural propension, believing it impossible for him ever to get the better of it. He would often be the first to rally himself upon that vice, of which the following is a singular instance. Upon his entering upon the government of Provence the deputies of it made him a present, as was the usual custom, of twenty thousand livres in a purse. As he seemed highly pleased at the donation, an old gentleman said very freely to him, "My lord, duke de Vendome, your predecessor, was contented to take the purse." The marshal replied, with the utmost calmness: "Duke de Vendome was really inimitable."

To return, friend Isaac, to the partiality of those who will not do justice to persons of ability in their life-time; and who seek only for opportunities of satisfying their jealousy, or of pleasing their detracting or envious dispositions: Were illustrious persons, who have been dead many years, and whom the invidious people in question set so high above the living, to rise from the grave, they would calumniate them as much in proportion as they now applaud them. If we examine things impartially, we all perceive that in almost all ages, there have been heroes, who may be put in parallel with all those whose actions have been transmitted to us by ancient authors. Methinks I find, in these latter ages, several great men, who may justly be put upon a level with such as Rome gave birth to, when in her highest point of glory.

Scipio Africanus was not a greater man than Henry IV. There required as much strength, genius, greatness of soul, and intrepidity, to achieve all the actions of the latter, as to perform what was done by the former. Scipio, being supported by a good army, drove Hannibal out of Italy, revived the courage of the Romans, who were terrified at the loss they had sustained at Cannae, carried, among the Carthaginians, the terror of a cruel war, with which they before had

set Italy on fire; and at last, in triumphing over Numantia and Carthage, freed Rome from that haughty and dangerous rival.

Henry IV. at the head of a parcel of soldiers who were half naked, having no money, nor any other succour but his bravery and his just claim, attempts to recover his crown. He conquers his kingdom, which had been usurped by the leaguers, the Spaniards, the friars, and the court of Rome. He executes all his designs; and after establishing himself on the throne of his ancestors, he makes those very Spaniards tremble, who, some years before, adding contempt to presumption, used to call him nothing but the Bearnois. The affairs of Henry IV. were in a much more shattered condition, after the death of his predecessor, than that of the Romans after the battle of Cannæ. They, at least, had money, as well as opportunities of recruiting their army. But the French hero, so far from having the like succours, at the time when he had recovered three fourths of his kingdom, was obliged to write a letter to one of his generals, in which he informed him, that his finances were so miserably low, that "for a week past, he was reduced to the necessity of eating at the tables of his officers; his pot not being in a condition to boil any longer, and his purveyors not having a shilling left." Nor was his wardrobe in a better state than his kitchen; he complaining in the same letter, that "his shirts began to be out at arms, and that he had not one complete furniture for a single horse, though he expected to attack the enemy every moment." It must be confessed, that the situation of the affairs of Henry IV. and those of Scipio, differed widely; and that, nevertheless, the one has achieved as mighty things as the other.

William III. may be compared to Julius Cæsar, with as much reason and equity as Henry IV. with Scipio. Heroes are not to be estimated by the extent of their conquests, but by the greatness of their souls, and the intrepidity necessary for forming

ing those conquests. Cæsar subdued the Gauls, after carrying on a war ten years against them. Is it so very extraordinary a thing that a general, who is at the head of an army of excellent soldiers, who has an opportunity of recruiting them with ease, who is supplied with every thing he wants in the most abundant manner, should at last conquer six or seven provinces? Were the French to enter Italy, and the rest of Europe were to stand unconcerned, would it be any great wonder should they conquer Piedmont, the Milanese, the Boulonois, and the kingdom of Naples, after carrying on a ten years war? People would wonder, on the contrary, that they should employ so many years in it. Such is pretty near the light in which we ought to consider the war carried on by Cæsar in Gaul. I grant that the people against whom he fought were much more valiant than the Milanese and Neapolitans: But, on the other hand, was not the Roman commonwealth infinitely more considerable than that of the French in this age? A Roman consul used to see as many kings in his antichamber, as a French minister of state sees dukes and peers in his.

Cæsar doubtless was greater in the civil wars, than in that waged by him against the Gauls. At the time that he was opposed by Pompey, and the greatest part of the commonwealth against him, he was forced to summon up all his prudence and valour, to conquer his enemies. I own that on this occasion, the advantage was equal on both sides, and that he was obliged to none but himself for his victories. But how famous soever the battle of Pharsalia may be, it yet is easier for a commander to get possession of the whole world, at the time that he is assisted and supported by half of it, than to gain a kingdom, in the eyes of all Europe: and this without any other succour than that of a commonwealth, all whose dominions are not so large as one of the provinces of a powerful and victorious monarch, whose interest it was to oppose that conquest. Let us examine this affair with impartiality.

Let

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Let us figure to ourselves king William III. landing in England, and there getting himself recognized monarch of three kingdoms: Let us afterwards accompany him into Ireland, crushing the rebellious with thunderbolts he hurled; let us consider him as maintaining, spite of his enemies, the kingdoms he had got possession of; and, at last dying peaceably on the throne which he had gained by his valour; beloved by the worthy among his subjects, dreaded by his enemies, and admired by most monarchs; we shall be obliged to confess, that this prince was not inferior to the vanquisher of the Gauls and of Pompey.

'Tis not only, friend Isaac, among princes and generals, that we meet with this equality which I suppose to be in great men both ancient and modern. In all ages, heroes of every kind are seen to rise; and there is not an illustrious person among the Romans, whatever may have been his condition of life, but some one, born in the late ages, may be found to compare with him. The Roman historians speak of the clemency, probity, and sincerity, of some generals, who, to the military virtues, joined those which form essentially the wise man, and the true philosopher. Bayard, an illustrious French knight, who lived under Lewis XII. and Francis I. equalled Cato in probity, Coriolanus in valour, Horatius Cocles in intrepidity, Minutius Scævola in greatness of soul, and Scipio in modesty and reserve.

I shall not mention here, worthy Isaac, any of the warlike achievements of this hero: Thou doubtless must have read them in the history of the monarchs under whom he fought. I shall therefore content myself with taking notice only of one particular relating to his moral virtues. At his return from the army of Italy, he made some stay in Grenoble, at a relation's house; and, being desirous of solacing himself after his military toils, he ordered his valet-de-chambre to look out for some good-natured girl, for him to pass the



night with. The servant in compliance with his master's commands, went to a woman of distinction, who, being reduced to the extremes of necessity, consented to deliver up her daughter, a girl of about sixteen or seventeen years of age, in consideration of a certain sum of money. 'Twas with infinite difficulty that the mother prevailed with her daughter to agree to the bargain. At last, whether through fear or necessity, this young victim went, at night to the apartment of the chevalier Bayard, who was greatly surprized to see a young person, beautiful as Venus, throw herself at his feet, and water them with her tears. "What affliction, young maiden, is this that seizes you, says the chevalier? I imagined to find you inclined to laugh rather than to weep." "Alas! Sir, replied the maiden, I know but too well the errand upon which my mother sent me hither. Poverty obliged her to commit an action unworthy of her; but I must obey her commands. However, Heaven is my witness, that I wish for death; and I should think myself happy, had I long since been numbered among the dead."

Bayard, moved at the tears of this fair complainant, desired her to take heart, protesting that he would not do any thing she should have cause to repent of; but that, on the contrary, she should have reason to applaud his behaviour. "God forbid, says he, I should offer to rob a person of her honour, who prizes it so highly. I will even use my endeavours to secure it, for ever, from the attacks of poverty." Saying this, he sent for the young woman's mother, and presenting her to her, said, "Here are four hundred crowns for your daughter's portion, and an hundred more to buy her cloaths. Heaven is my witness that I would do more for her if it laid in my power. Get her therefore a husband as soon as you can, and endeavour, by procuring her a happy establishment, to repair the injury you intended to do her."

If we inquire, excellent Isaac, into the noblest and most generous actions performed among the ancients, I question whether we shall find many of a brighter cast. What a number of incidents, worthy the esteem of posterity, have happened in our age, which yet, by their not having been taken notice of by some writer, will be buried in eternal oblivion? If our descendants should admire former ages more than the present, this will not be the fault of a considerable number of wise and virtuous persons living at this time, but that of the historians, who chuse to fill their works with an hundred trifling rhapsodies rather than with some instructive incidents.

I will conclude my letter, dear Isaac, with an adventure of the like kind, which happened in our days, to an illustrious German cardinal, who died not many years since. He resided commonly in Rome, and the poor considered him as their parent; he spending the greatest part of his revenues in their relief. An ancient woman in particular, was sensible of the great generosity of this venerable prelate. She was seized by a citizen of Rome, to whom she owed fifteen crowns, without being able to pay him. The creditor was for ever threatening to sue her, when she always begg'd him to have patience, promising to pay him at a certain time, which she yet was not able to do. One day, as she was going to her creditor's, in order to procure, if possible, a farther delay, her daughter, who was a very beautiful young woman, went along with her. Immediately the lustful Italian fixing his eyes on this blooming fair, felt certain motions, and offered to give the mother a receipt in full, in case he might have the satisfaction of lying with her daughter. The wretched parent promised that he should, in case she did not bring him the money in a week. During this interval, she did nothing but bewail her fate with incessant tears; but this was of no service towards her getting the money. At last, there remained but one day; after which, she

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must

must either pay the debt, or deliver up her daughter. In this extremity she resolved to address the cardinal, of whose generosity she had heard so many encomiums, by persons in the like unhappy circumstances with herself. Accordingly, she threw herself at his feet, and confessed to him the sad dilemma she was in. The cardinal immediately gave her an order upon his treasurer, to the amount of sixty crowns. The good woman did not know the contents of the order, (she not being able to read) so was vastly surprized when threescore crowns were counted out to her. The clerk, who was for paying her the money, could never prevail upon her to take it, she saying, that his eminence must certainly be mistaken, she having desired no more than fifteen crowns. The treasurer would not take the order, but upon condition that she should receive the whole sum; but she was inflexible in her resolution. She then returned to the cardinal, when giving him back his order: "Your eminence, says she, must be mistaken, in writing sixty crowns instead of fifteen. Your treasurer would not take the order, except I received the whole sum; and I could never prevail upon him to count me out only the money I asked for." The cardinal admiring the probity of this poor woman, rewarded her in the most liberal manner. "You are in the right, says he, I was mistaken. Instead of threescore I intended to put five hundred. Go, honest woman; don't give yourself the trouble to come any more; and with this money purchase a good husband for your daughter."

I know not, friend Isaac, which of these two actions is most praise-worthy, that of the cardinal, or that of the woman above-mentioned. Had this incident happened among the ancient Romans, Livy, Florus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Valerius Maximus would have inserted it in their works; and perhaps no modern historian may ever make the least mention of it.

Enjoy

Enjoy thy health, good Isaac, live contented and happy, and always do justice to any generous actions thou mayest discover.

## L E T T E R CLXXVI.

The uncertainty of the fate of princes, exemplified in the stories of Pompey, Osman, Bajazet, Brunehalt, queen of France, Joan, queen of Naples, and Charles I. of England; with reflections suitable to the occasion.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

London.—

**T**HE surprizing catastrophes, worthy Brito, that happen so frequently in Africa, and the tragical death of the Algerine princes whom thou spakest to me of in thy last letters, made me reflect on the sad fate of many European princes, who, one would have imagined, upon all accounts, must have been secure from any cruel reverses of fortune. Their unhappiness was so much the greater, as it was impossible for them ever to think of preparing, in their security, a proper succour against the sad fate that oppressed them on a sudden; and in this they were much more to be pitied than the African princes.

When an Algerine monarch is crowned, the death which his predecessor came to, informs him what he may expect his own to be; at least, it furnishes him with a large scope for reflecting on the instability of all human grandeur. But a French monarch, or a German sovereign, see nothing, upon their ascending the throne, but the glory that surrounds it; and are even persuaded, that it would be impossible for a thunder-bolt to strike them from it. Nevertheless, spite of the presumption of those kings, intoxicated with pride and vanity, how many of them, after being raised to the highest point of felicity and glory, have,



at last, been plunged into an abyfs of misfortunes? Some of them have been treated with a great ignominy as the moft abandoned villains; and the remembrance of the evils they fuffered ftill intimidates thofe who read the hiftories of the fad fall and tragical end of a great number of monarchs. Without calling to mind the misfortunes of fo many princes and great men, relations of which are found in ancient hiftory; and paffing over Marius, Cato, Regulus, and a vaft many more; if we fix only on the deplorable end of Pompey, how vaft a field is opened to us, for reflecting on the uncertain fate of the greateft men, how exalted foever their power and authority may have been? A monarch, as a leffon for him not to be proud of his high condition, need but confider of Pompey, fome time before the battle of Pharfalia. He fees him mafter over thofe who held the fovereignty of the world; more abfolute in the fenate than a king in the midft of his privy council; at the head of a noble army, and commanding over a crowd of kings. It is impoffible for man to be furrounded with a brighter blaze of glory: Yet how was it afterwards clouded; and how wretched was the fate of that illuftrious Roman, when he fled from the fields of Pharfalia? He is procribed, and forfaken by all his allies; cannot find an afylum even in thofe places, where, but a little before, he commanded; and he, at laft, is butchered by a parcel of vile flaves, by infamous Egyptians, who would not have dared to infult the meaneft Roman foldier. At the time that he is killed, his few remaining friends, inftead of uſing their endeavours to fuccour him, are wholly taken up with their own fears; do not allow themſelves time to pity him; and only confider how they may beſt ſecure their own lives by flight\*. What a dreadful end,

\* Conſtabat eos qui occidentem Vulneribus Cn. Pompeium vidiffent, cum in illo ipſo accerbiffimo miſerrimoque ſpectaculo  
excellent

excellent Brito, was this! What a dreadful example is it of the capriciousness of fortune! what man could ever have believed, when Pompey went to the capitol in triumph, that one day, this hero, the admiration of the whole world, should be sentenced to die by a few miserable Egyptians? Would not any person who should have foretold such a thing have been looked upon as a madman?

Such catastrophes, good Brito, occur not only among the antient, the later ages abound but too much in them; modern history is full of them, and relates some that are still more terrible. There is nothing infamous in Pompey's death, which may be considered as a consequence attending on the calamities of war. But within these few centuries, there is no kingdom, not even such as boast the most happy frame of government, in Europe, but furnish some fatal tragedy, attended with such circumstances as even fright such as are most used to reflect on the inconstancy of fortune.

Before we come to the most civilized nations, let us stop, friend Brito, some time in Constantinople. Let us take a view of Osman, carried through all the streets, fixed upon an ass; and insulted in the most cruel manner by the mad populace, and the insolent soldiery. Those very Janizaries who then spit in Osman's face, did not dare to speak to him, two days before, when they were prostrate at his feet, and afraid of lifting up their eyes to him. Who could ever have believed that an emperor, sprung from the blood of the Ottomans, so highly revered by the Turks, and so dear to the soldiers, would ever have suffered indignities to which a Nazarene condemned to die for the most enormous crimes, was never exposed? I am certain, dear Brito, that those who insulted

culo sibi timerent, quod se classe hostium circumfusus viderent, nihil tum aliud egisse nisi ut remiges hortarentur, & ut salutem adipiscerentur, fuga, postquam Tyrum venissent tum adflicti lamentari que cepisse. Cicero, Orat. ad Brutum, cap. VII.

Osman

Osman in this shameful manner, far from thinking, a month before their insurrection, that such a revolution could ever have been brought about, would have killed any person who should have dared to hint any such thing. For the Janizaries to dethrone their sultan, and sacrifice his life to his successor, this is seen so very often, that it does not any way surprize. But for these very Janizaries to insult the blood and the name of the Ottomans; to refuse honours of every kind to the body of the prince murdered by them; to expose him to the scorn of the populace before they deliver him up to the mutes armed with the deadly bow-string, this is a most extraordinary circumstance, and proves the strange lengths to which the caprice of fortune may go.

Bajazet's fate, how cruel soever, does not strike so much as that of Osman. The former was forced to submit to whatever punishment a proud victorious enemy should please to inflict upon him. Tho' he might not expect to be treated with so much severity as he met with from Tamerlane, yet he could not but believe that the victor would take a sharp revenge. The latter, on the contrary, had custom, prejudices, superstition, reason and equity on his side; and yet these could not save him.

It were to be wished, worthy Brito, that the calamities which have befallen several princes, had made as strong an impression on the minds of their successors, as the misfortunes of Bajazet did on those of the Ottoman princes. How much would this diminish the abuses found in Europe! whereas the Turkish sultans, thro' a false and ridiculous shame, have left off the custom of marrying, to prevent the Ottoman blood from being ever exposed again to the insults which that prince met with, when, being shut up in an iron cage, Tamerlane caused himself to be attended by Bajazet's wives, stark naked: To prevent, I say, accidents that never happen but once, and cure an imaginary evil by a real one, the European monarchs should have enacted laws, forbidding

their

their successors to encroach upon the rights of their subjects; and enjoining them to consider their people in the same amiable light as a father does his children. The tragical end of several Nazarene monarchs would have suggested arguments enough to them to establish such laws; equally useful to the security of the sovereign, and the tranquility of the subjects.

When I examine, dear Brito, the sad end of several Nazarene princes, and of some princesses of the same religion, this surprizes me still more than the catastrophe of Bajazet and Osman. Actions of the most cruel and bloody nature may naturally be expected among nations subject to perpetual revolutions, who are guided solely by their caprice and first impulses. But that, in polite nations, who profess to follow the dictates of right reason, so many monarchs should have come to so ignominious an end, this is a circumstance I scarce know how to account for; and it cannot but suggest a spacious field for reflection to all who study the heart of man.

The first untimely end, that now occurs to me, is that of Brunehalt, queen of France. I will not pretend to say, whether that princess was really guilty of all the enormous crimes laid to her charge. Some very eminent authors attempted to apologize for her in the last age; and, a circumstance which seems to confirm their opinion is, the eulogiums bestowed upon her by a famous Roman pontiff\*, he applauding her to the skies. Be this as it will, how blame-worthy soever her conduct may have been, yet those who punished her should have paid a regard to her birth and rank, and have respected, in her person, that of other monarchs. The laws of decency and of reason, and the dignity which the throne claims, require the widest difference to be made between the punishment of a queen, and that of a highwayman or assassin. Nevertheless, the ill fated Brunehalt met with a more cruel treatment than that in-

\* Gregory the Great.



flicted on Cartouch and Guignard the Jesuit. "She was sentenced, says a celebrated historian †, to be tortured three days in private; after which she was carried upon a camel all through the camp, not so much with the design that her army might behold her in that wretched disguise, as that she might be treated in the most injurious manner possible by the meanest individuals belonging to it. At last she was sentenced to be tied, by the hair and hands, to the tail of a fiery horse, and dragged in this manner through the dung-fields, 'till she was dead. This sentence being immediately put in execution, the queen, the instant the horse she was tied upon was spurred, had her brains beat out; and in that dismal condition she was dragged through hedges, brambles, briars, and over rocks, till her body was so torn, that what remained of it had scarce the appearance of a carcass." What a sad fate, dear Brito, was this for a queen of France! How dreadful an example was it of the justice of Heaven! and what a lesson for all crown'd heads was the ignominious punishment of this princess!

Joan queen of Naples came to as disastrous an end. Being besieged in the fortress of Chateaufort, by Charles Durazzo, the king of Hungary's cousin, she surrendered herself; not doubting but he would shew her the regard due to her birth and to her exalted rank. However, she was greatly mistaken. For this general, by order of king Lewis, caused her to be strangled and hanged in that place, where she had caused king Andrew, one of her four husbands to be strangled. A filken halter was used at this cruel execution; she having commanded the like instrument to be employed, in putting her husband to death." This princess was justly punished for her dissolute and bloody actions: and it ought to serve as a memento to those princes, who, intoxicated with their grandeur and power, fondly imagine that the

† Pasquier, Recherches de la France, Livre X. chap. XIX. pag. 957.

throne is able to secure them from the vengeance of Heaven.

There are but few in this age, who pity the two princesses, whose misfortunes I have just now set before thee, or think that they met with too severe a fate. As these were charged with perpetrating the blackest crimes, the ignominy of their actions lessens very much the detestation in which mankind hold such as have struck at the majesty of princes in general, and failed in the most essential duties. But what are we to think of those who put to death, upon a scaffold, princes and princesses, whose virtue, rectitude, and goodness were known to all Europe? How astonished is a wise man, a philosopher, at reading the story of the lady Jane Grey, losing her head upon a scaffold, tho' guilty of no other crime than the rebellion and insurrection of her proud parents?

Charles I. was equally ill fated; though not so innocent. This prince, who, during some years, was so much adored by the English, that they cut off the nose and ears of an insolent divine, who had written disrespectfully of that monarch, lost his head upon a scaffold, in the sight of those very people who, a little before, had worshipped him. He was led to the scaffold by a man of very little figure, who, raising himself insensibly to the highest employments, presumed, at last, to take the august title of Protector of the English nation; a title, in my opinion, an hundred times more august, more energetic, and pompous, than that of king and emperor.

What an example, worthy Brito, is this of the decrees of Providence! and how strong an impression ought it to make upon the minds of kings? Instead of the fables and intrigues, which are generally the subjects, in painting, that adorn the galleries of princes, methinks they should make choice of the misfortunes of Charles I. and order the ensuing inscription to be written under this series

ries of painting, as a lesson to themselves and their successors. "Kings of the earth, learn by this dreadful example, that neither your rank nor power can secure you from the most cruel reverses of fortune. He who put the scepter into your hands, may take it from you in an instant. Without his aid, what are you able to achieve? You are mere worms, to whom he has given some power over worms like yourselves. Beseech, therefore, him by whose power you exist, to enable you always to follow the dictates of justice, in order that your subjects may be preserved from a spirit of enthusiasm, confusion and rebellion." In my opinion, dear Brito, such an inscription would be still more useful than that which is seen in all the tribunals of justice in France. "*Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos* \*."

At the same time, dear Brito, that I disapprove the cruelty exercised by subjects over their monarchs. I would not pretend to authorize the injustice and tyranny of monarchs over their subjects. God forbid I should ever run into such an extreme. I only wish that each party would do the other justice; and that the virtues in kings might not be confounded with the vices. When I read the mighty achievements of Alexander, I bestow upon him the praise which an illustrious conqueror deserves: But when I cast my eye on the murdered Clitus, I feel my bosom burn with the indignation which the sight of an assassin inspires. I then do not see Alexander but a frantic wretch. The exalted actions of heroes and heroines ought not to have such an effect, as to make us consider their vices and crimes as so many good qualities.

Enjoy thy health, good Brito; may thy life be propitious and contented; and detesting those who foment murders and rebellions, entertain always the most respectful awe for the God of Israel.

\* Virgil, *Æneid*. Libr. VI.

## LETTER CLXXVII.

The characters of two Englishmen, who had travelled to France and Italy, one an ignorant, prejudiced, conceited fellow; the other an impartial sensible man.—Their different descriptions of France and Italy.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

FOR ever studious, friend Isaac, to get as much light as possible into the manners and way of thinking of the English, I examine very carefully their most minute actions; and listen very attentively to all their discourses, how inconsiderable soever they may appear. I have got acquainted with two Englishmen, who are just returned from their travels thro' France and Italy; and as they differ widely in the disposition and cast of their minds, I take a great pleasure in comparing the different relations they give of their adventures, and such particulars as affected them most strongly. The first is a discreet, wise man; one who considers persons of all nations as his brethren and countrymen; pitying, but not despising, those whose minds are clouded by superstition; and imputing their errors to the force of prejudice, and the unhappiness of their situation, rather than to a weakness of mind. The second, on the contrary, is a true Englishman, approving nothing but what he sees in London; hating all foreigners in general; not satisfying himself with the applauses due to the great men and the eminent writers to which England has given birth; but firmly believing that, out of his native country, there cannot be any able generals or good writers; as if labour and genius were to be met with only in England; and that God created the men of other nations with only three senses.

The other day, I asked the traveller who was so strongly prejudiced in favour of his native country,

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what



what it was that prompted him to visit other nations?  
 "What was the motive, says I, of your visiting  
 "France and Italy? Why did you take the pains  
 "to travel at so great a distance, merely to visit  
 "places and things which could be of no service to  
 "you? If you was desirous of seeing nothing but  
 "houses, forests, mountains, and rivers, you might  
 "have found all these in England, without running  
 "so far." I went to Italy, replied he, to get a sight  
 of the opera at Venice; and to see the jubilee in  
 Rome. "How! replied I, you travelled above five  
 "hundred leagues, merely to hear a female warble  
 "and to get a sight of some childish ceremonies  
 "which you would be the first to ridicule; and did  
 "not condescend to enquire whether, in the many  
 "cities you passed through, there was not some  
 "philosopher, some man of sense, who deserved a  
 "visit from you, and whose judicious conversations  
 "might be of advantage to you? How many are  
 "there in Italy, where you saw only priests, in  
 "grotesque habits, muttering before marble altars  
 "where you heard none but women and half-men  
 "sing upon a stage; how many, I say, able mathematicians  
 "are there, how many illustrious geometers,  
 "tricians and great naturalists; in a word, excellent  
 "philosophers, who could have entertained  
 "you with conversations infinitely more delightful  
 "to the mind, than the alluring, but transient  
 "sounds of Faustina and Cuzzoni's voice? I should  
 "not wonder if a man, who was desirous of enlightening  
 "his understanding, that an Englishman who  
 "was passionately desirous of cultivating his own  
 "genius, should set out from London, for China  
 "merely to study Confucius's philosophy. But for  
 "a traveller to ramble over, like a madman, for  
 "two or three years, part of Europe, merely to see  
 "porticos and columns, and to hear musicians; and  
 "to be entirely unacquainted with the learned men  
 "found in the several countries into which he travelled;  
 "that, at his return home, he should display  
 "illustrations

illustrious men whom he never saw; should judge of the learning and knowledge of Algarotti by the warbling of an opera-singer; of the merit of marquis Maffei by the front of St. Mark's palace; of the profound knowledge of some Roman antiquaries, by the blessings of the Roman pontiff, and the avarice and luxury of the prelates who surround him. This appears to me very extraordinary, especially in an Englishman who pretends to reflection.

"Be so good, continued I, as to tell me what it was that drew you into France? Were you induced to visit it from as trifling motives, as those which prompted you to go into Italy?" "I went to see France, replied the Englishman, because all persons of a certain distinction travel thither. People must always be in the fashion. By the way, though amused myself in Paris, I yet saw nothing in that city which made me entertain a very advantageous idea of the genius of the French. All those who were represented to me as men of wit, were a parcel of shallow fops, who sometimes threw out their jokes, or rather waggeries, heightened by certain lively flashes. But we don't call this wit in England; we requiring all sprightly touches to be seasoned by reason, and by wise reflections." "Is this then, says I, the idea you have formed to yourself of the French nation? And this you take from the lights which those you used to frequent in Paris have furnished you with? But pray, continued I, do you know Fontenelle, president de Montesquieu, or Voltaire? Was you ever in the company of Cassini or Maupertuis? The last mentioned are thought to be masters of something more than wit?" No, replied the Englishman; I am an utter stranger to the persons you speak of. They surely never go to the opera: I never once heard their names mentioned in the pit, much less in the houses where I used to tipple. I never once heard them spoke of at the Hotel de Gevres, at the

“ marchionefs de \* \* \*, at the countefs de \* \* \*, nor  
 “ in the public walks. Where elfe then could I have  
 “ got acquainted with them?” “ In any other places,  
 “ replied I, but thofe you have named to me. You  
 “ might eafily have met with them in the afsemblies  
 “ of the learned, in the academies, at the houfes of  
 “ perfons of diftinguifhed knowledge, in thofe con-  
 “ vents where learning is cultivated, &c. What  
 “ opinion would you entertain of me, if, at my re-  
 “ turn to Conftantinople, I fhould form a judgment  
 “ of the merit of the Englifh, from thofe perfons I  
 “ had fpoke to in coffee-houfes; from fome writers  
 “ of the loweft clafs; and from fome impertinent  
 “ politicians, who ground the projects they invent  
 “ on the good opinion they entertain of themfelves  
 “ and their countrymen? Would you not take me  
 “ to be either a fool or a madman, if meeting me  
 “ in the Atmeidan \*, you fhould hear me addrefs a  
 “ Turk in thefe words? London, in which I refid-  
 “ ed fix months, is a city peopled with proud mad-  
 “ men, whofe chief frenzy is their fupposing no  
 “ creatures deferve to be called men but themfelves.  
 “ The bufinefs of people who are troubled with fo  
 “ whimfical a diftemper, as that I mention, is to  
 “ cabal againft the miniftry. They are eternally  
 “ talking about the ancient government of Greece  
 “ and many a man, who does not know what is do-  
 “ ing at his own houfe, is for ever difputing on the  
 “ laws of Solon and Lycurgus; and cites, at ran-  
 “ dom, the customs of Athens and Sparta. Another  
 “ though he does not know a word of French, in-  
 “ veighs bitterly againft all the authors in that lan-  
 “ guage; and infolently calls Moliere a fool, Racine  
 “ a trifling rhimer, and Bourdaloue a mere dotard.  
 “ Some, who perhaps imagine the fun to be ten  
 “ times as big as the fixed ftars, call Descartes a  
 “ dreamer: Nay, feveral among them will difpute  
 “ whether it is poffible for a Frenchman ever to make

\* The ancient Hippodrome.

“one judicious reflection. Nevertheless, these  
“vain and presumptuous people have not one  
“single good writer among them.

“I am certain, continued I, that if you heard  
“me talk in this manner, you could not forbear  
“enquiring upon what grounds it is that I set the  
“English nation in so false and ridiculous a light?  
“Would you be satisfied with my answering you  
“in this manner, I form my judgment of the Eng-  
“lish, from the discourses I heard in coffee-houses,  
“taverns, and places of public resort? How,  
“Sir, would you reply, were these the only places  
“in which you sought for materials to compose your  
“travels? I will venture to observe, that all your  
“inquiries have been to no purpose. You might as  
“well have staid at home. Were Locke and Sir  
“Isaac Newton living when you was in England?  
“Were you acquainted with them? Did you ever  
“speak to so many illustrious literati who live in  
“London? Do you know Pope, Gordon, Tindal,  
“&c. 'Tis from persons of this cast, that we ought  
“to judge of the writers of a nation, and not from  
“a parcel of smatterers in literature, with which  
“all countries are equally pestered.”

However, all my arguments, friend Isaac, could  
not make the least impression upon this obstinate  
Englishman. His extravagant prejudice in favour  
of his native country opposed such an insurmount-  
able barrier, as the most evident reasons could not  
once remove; and all I could obtain from him was,  
to allow foreigners some merit, but so very small,  
compared to that with which the English are abun-  
dantly stocked, that, in his opinion, there is a  
wider difference between a Frenchman, an Italian,  
a German, and an Englishman, than the Janse-  
nists suppose to be between St. Austin and the patriarch  
of the Jesuits.

I have frequently hinted, to the judicious tra-  
veller, his countryman's prejudice. Being a per-  
son of great wisdom and abilities, he is very sorry



"o hear of his blind prejudice, and speaks with the  
 utmost impartiality of the virtues and vices of those  
 nations with which he is acquainted. "Italy,  
 "says he, is a country which presents, at first sight,  
 "nothing but one perpetual series of luxury, de-  
 "bauchery and superstition. One would imagine,  
 "that it would be impossible for a philosopher to  
 "meet with any thing in it worthy of his atten-  
 "tion and esteem. Nevertheless, when he be-  
 "haves with prudence and reserve, and endea-  
 "vours to get acquainted with men of letters,  
 "he finds a vast number of persons possessed of  
 "great abilities, whose names indeed are not so  
 "well known as those of many other literati, be-  
 "cause they are obliged to be silent, and to keep  
 "their learning to themselves. Was the inqui-  
 "sition to be abolished to day, the public would  
 "see on the morrow, a great number of excellent  
 "books, no ways inferior to those of other nations.  
 "I consider a man of letters as an orange tree.  
 "Should such a tree be set in a box, it must neces-  
 "sarily be confined, and bear fruit of a very mid-  
 "dling size; but, on the contrary, if it was planted  
 "at large in the earth, it would produce infinitely  
 "finer. Italy would have given birth to ten such  
 "historians as father Paul, had authors been allowed  
 "to write in Rome, in Naples, and in Florence,  
 "with as much liberty as in Venice. A traveller  
 "who is desirous of enlightning his mind, ought  
 "to endeavour to find out such learned men as are  
 "obliged to conceal part of their merit; and form  
 "a judgment of what they might be, by what they  
 "are allowed to appear.  
 "With respect to the extravagant dissoluteness with  
 "which the Italians are charged, I own that every  
 "virtuous mind cannot but be shocked at it. A  
 "traveller is always surprized to see a number of  
 "lewd houses protected by the government, in a  
 "city that assumes the name of Holy; a circumstance  
 "which does not give one a very favourable idea  
 "of the modesty and virtue of the persons who  
 "preside

“ preside in such a government. The people, says  
 “ a wise heathen, behave always with modesty  
 “ in those commonwealths, where the chief  
 “ persons in it dread infamy \*. In Rome, any per-  
 “ son, who should say that the pope’s slipper is not  
 “ sacred, would be put to death; and at the same  
 “ time, the magistrates there permit a woman to  
 “ turn common prostitute, provided she pays a tri-  
 “ bute; and for this she is protected by the sove-  
 “ reign, and permitted to riot in debaucheries of  
 “ of every kind.”

The prudent and impartial manner, in which this  
 Englishman spoke of the Italians, made me extremely  
 desirous, friend Isaac, of knowing what opinion he  
 entertained of the French. “ They possess, replied  
 “ he, great qualities; but then they, at the same  
 “ time, have great imperfections. In England they  
 “ are generally charged with being a mere super-  
 “ ficial people, and to have more wit than learning.  
 “ There is some truth in this reproach. It is certain  
 “ that, among the vast number of authors, with  
 “ which France abounds, the greatest part of them  
 “ write nothing but trifling pieces, such as tales,  
 “ romances, and love-poems; and that the name  
 “ of learned man is given, in Paris, to a person  
 “ whose only compositions are plays. Nevertheless,  
 “ there are among them some genius’s of the first  
 “ rank, who ought not in any manner to be con-  
 “ founded with those I am speaking of. The aca-  
 “ demy of sciences, which is infinitely superior to  
 “ the rest of the literary academies of the kingdom,  
 “ is formed generally of persons whose works prove  
 “ evidently that there are in France, as well as in  
 “ England, men of the greatest sagacity and pene-  
 “ tration. It is true, indeed, that in certain works  
 “ the English genius seems to attain certain heights  
 “ which that of the French does not expect to arrive  
 “ at. The former will soar to the skies, break the

\* Septem Sapientum, & eorum qui iis connumerantur, Apoph-  
 theg & Præcepta, page 8.

“ chain of prejudices, and discover truth, spite of the  
 “ clamours of superstition, and the stratagems of  
 “ falsehood. The French would doubtless enjoy the  
 “ same advantage, had they the like opportunity of  
 “ displaying the efforts of their genius ; but, un-  
 “ happily for them, they are obliged to restrain it.  
 “ They are not wanting in a capacity for reflection,  
 “ but only in the liberty of indulging themselves in  
 “ that particular. It is owing to this restraint that  
 “ most of them amuse themselves with trifles ; and  
 “ the worst circumstance in this affair is, that they  
 “ at last come to consider them as serious, neces-  
 “ sary and important. To this circumstance is ow-  
 “ ing the reputation they have got among foreign-  
 “ ers, of being a shallow, and superficial people :  
 “ This also subjects them in the most arbitrary man-  
 “ ner, to every new mode ; makes them consider  
 “ those trifles as matters of great consequence ; cau-  
 “ ses them to be accused of being remarkably incon-  
 “ stant and wavering ; and fills them with such a  
 “ good opinion of themselves, as must necessarily  
 “ make those who delight in so vain a reflection,  
 “ appear very ridiculous.”

I know not, worthy Isaac, in what light thou  
 wilt consider the sentiments of this Englishman ; but  
 they appeared to me as judicious, as those of his  
 countryman seemed shallow.

Enjoy thy health, friend Isaac ; live contented  
 and happy ; and carefully root out of thy mind the  
 most inconsiderable seeds of prejudice.

L E T

## L E T T E R. CLXXVIII.

The happy condition of the English bishops since the Reformation, considered.—The character of cardinal de Lorrain, a great lover of the fair sex; from whose behaviour and of some other leading men in the church, the author endeavours to shew the necessity there is for priests to marry.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

**T**HE English bishops, dear Isaac, are not obliged, like those of France and Italy, to lead a life of celibacy. Ever since they separated from the Romish communion, they have the same privilege to marry as the laity; and, at the same time that they preserved all the perogatives of their character, they have softened all the rigours and austerities which accompanied it. This artful and political conduct, of not making any change in the ancient hierarchy of the church, has been of very great prejudice to the court of Rome.

It is certain that if, when the Reformation was begun in England, the government had proposed to the bishops their descending to the degree of simple pastors, and establishing the canons of the Geneva church, not a man of them but would have inveighed against an innovation which would have been so disadvantageous. They all would have opposed the new doctrines that were to be introduced; would have stirred up the people, over whose minds they, by their character, have a mighty ascendant, to take up arms; and if it would not have been possible for them to put an entire stop to the establishment of the new doctrines, they at least would have checked the progress of them considerably.

Those princes who shook off the pope's yoke, took the most effectual methods possible to win over the clergy to their interest. They permitted them to enjoy the wealth they then possessed; they did not  
abridge



abridge any of their privileges; and let them marry spruce, buxom lasses, who might help them to consume delightfully the revenues of their benefices. Had the same conduct been observed in France; and that, instead of writing invectives against the popes of Rome, the government had addressed them in these or such like words; "We will permit you to  
 " enjoy fifty thousand livres annually; we will con-  
 " descend to call you my lords; you shall not lose  
 " any of the prerogatives you enjoy over the clergy.  
 " Consent only to shake off the yoke under which  
 " you, as well as the rest of the nation groan; and,  
 " as a reward of your compliance, you shall be per-  
 " mitted to employ your endeavours in getting fu-  
 " ture little bishops."

And you may court a pretty fair,  
 Gay, buxom, smart, beyond compare;  
 A girl of a vivacious thought,  
 With bubbies sweetly-circling wrought;  
     Of humour kind;  
     A gentle mind;  
     In words discreet,  
     For maidens meet;  
 A maid of pleasing step and voice;  
 Whose mind and form command our choice\*.

Had the like proposals been made to the French prelates, I am firmly persuaded there is not one of them, but would cheerfully have accepted such an offer. "Well, would these have said, since the number of the elect must be accomplished, bishops are as fit to exert their endeavours in this particular as persons in a private condition." But would any persons in their senses imagine, that all the superior clergy would not have been disgusted, when an attempt should be made to reduce them to the condition of priestlings, or petty parish-priests? a circumstance which Beza found but too sensibly in the con-

\* Oeuvres de Marot, Chançon XXV.

ference held at Poissi. Being asked by some prelates, who were uncertain with regard to their temporalities, how these were to be ordered, in case they should declare openly for his doctrine, and he making the ingenious answer following, "that they must sacrifice them all at the foot of Christ's cross," these worldly-minded prelates immediately turned their backs upon him: And thus by his failing to be as politic as the English reformers, he lost the finest opportunity possible of introducing a thorough reformation in the Gallican church.

I do not doubt but that, at the beginning of the Reformation, a great many prelates were inclined in their hearts to favour the Protestant religion, on account of the pleasures that attend on the marriage state, and the satisfaction of having wives and children: And had it not been made a condition, that they should descend to be mere pastors, in taking a wife, the French bishops might have been as easily prevailed upon to change their opinions as the English. I will suppose, for example sake, that cardinal de Lorrain had been desirous of marrying; the fear he would have been under, of losing his surprizingly rich temporalities, must necessarily have diverted him from it; and to satisfy, at one and the same time, his ambition and amorous disposition, he would have been prompted much more strongly to make use of his neighbour's wife, than to take one to himself, who would only have impoverished him. His conduct on this occasion is well known; we being told by himself, that he was extremely fond of the amorous congress, and had enjoyed the most beautiful women of the court. And he scrupled so little to conceal his inclination in this particular, that he ventured one day to make his boasts of it to the dutechs of Savoy, in one of those occasions, when the vivacity of the impulses are such, as not to leave the least doubt of their being genuine. It is Brancome, who informs us, with his usual mirth, of this particular. "Cardinal de Lorrain, says he, going through Piedmont about some affairs, by order of  
" his

" his sovereign, visited the duke and dutchefs. Af-  
 " ter discoursing some time with the duke, he went  
 " to the dutchefs's apartment, in order to make his  
 " compliments to her; when going up to that lady,  
 " who was the proudest woman in the world, she  
 " gave him her hand to kiss. The cardinal, exas-  
 " perated at this affront, advanced in order to kiss  
 " her lips, when she withdrew in proportion. At last  
 " the cardinal losing all patience, and drawing still  
 " nearer, gave her two or three kisses, notwith-  
 " standing her outcries both in Portugueze and Spa-  
 " nish. How, says he, are you to put on these airs  
 " to me! I am allowed to kiss my mistress, who is  
 " the greatest princess in the world; and shall not  
 " I be allowed to kiss such a little, dirty dutchefs as  
 " you! I'd have you to know, that I have LAINE  
 " WITH ladies full as handsome, and of as illustri-  
 " ous a family as yourself\*."

After this, worthy Isaac, it would be very difficult  
 for the most zealous Nazarenes to prove, that cardi-  
 nal de Lorraine would not have taken a wife, if he  
 could have done this without hurting his circumstan-  
 ces. They must confess that this prelate, whom  
 they consider as one of the chief pillars of their re-  
 ligion, considered adultery as a very light crime, if  
 any at all; and consequently imagined it was not in-  
 cumbent upon him to seek for remedies against this  
 vice; or they must acknowledge, that could he have  
 found out some expedient, without totally ruining  
 his fortune, he doubtless would have made a proper  
 use of it; for his complexion was so extremely amo-  
 rous, that he would have been forced either to mar-  
 ry or turn fornicator. It is well known that he was  
 possessed with a sort of love-frenzy; and one would  
 have been apt to imagine, that Venus had fired his  
 veins with that poison which proved so fatal to Ma-  
 nos's daughters. " I have been told, continues the  
 " author above cited, that when any handsome man  
 " den or married lady came to the court, he used to

\* accost her immediately \*, and entring into discourse with her, say, that he would tutor her; what a tutor was this! I believe he did not find it as difficult a task on this occasion as to tame a wild colt! And indeed people used to say to him, that there were very few young ladies who lived at court, or were newly come to it, but were either drawn away or deluded by the bounty of the said cardinal; and few or no women, at their leaving that court, had any virtue left. And indeed, at this time their wardrobes were better stocked with gowns and petticoats of gold, silver and silk, than those of our princesses and queens are in the present age. I myself have had a proof of this, having seen two or three wardrobes filled in this manner, and at the same time was certain, that neither their fathers, mothers, nor husbands could have afforded to purchase them such a quantity of these things."

It is surprizing, good Isaac, that a man of the character of cardinal de Lorrain, who might have judged, from what he himself felt, how necessary it would be for the clergy to marry; and who was one of the most shining prelates in the assembly held by the Nazarene pontiffs in Trent, in order for debating on the doctrines of Luther and Calvin, did not vote in the strongest terms, for checking the dissoluteness of priests, by permitting them to marry. How could a prelate, whom the court of France could scarce supply with concubines enough, imagine that a parish-priest, who lived upon his cure in the country, could have so much virtue as not to lie with his maid?

Doubtless a great many of the prelates in the council of Trent knew from their own conduct, how highly necessary it was to permit the clergy to marry. Nevertheless, through a false delicacy, and an obstinacy that was altogether unpardonable, they strengthened still more a custom which has



since given occasion to the perpetrating numberless crimes, and made the Nazarene priests contemptible in the eyes of the whole universe.

The fautors of the new opinions were furnished with a fine handle for enveighing against those canons which forbid the clergy to marry. Cardinal del Monte, afterwards pope Julius III. and who presided as legate in the council of Trent, had still more reason to marry than cardinal de Lorrain. For though he maintained, that priests and bishops ought to be forbid marriage upon the severest penalties; not contented with diverting himself now and then with the ladies, he made use of the privilege which the ancient heathens allowed to their deities; and had a young Ganimede, who though infinitely less beautiful than that of Jupiter, was yet exceedingly beloved by cardinal del Monte. He took this Ganimede with him to the council; it being impossible for him to live from him. However, he once was forced to bear his absence, he being obliged to send him, at a great distance, for the recovery of his health. When his minion returned, the cardinal went to meet him, accompanied by most of the members of the council, and though they saw the amorous transports, and lascivious embraces of the president, yet this was not sufficient to prove to them how absolutely useful and necessary it was, that the clergy should marry. These shocking particulars are told us by a celebrated Nazarene historian. "When Julius, says he\*, was but archbishop of Sponto, and governor of the city of Boulogne, he took into his house a young boy, born in Piacenza whose birth nobody knew any thing of. The master grew prodigiously fond of the boy, and carried him to Trent, where he had like to have lost him by a violent fit of illness. However, sending him, by the advice of physicians to Verona, for the change of air, Innocent (for such was the minion's name) might

\* Father Paul, Book iii. ad ann. 1550.

covered his health there, and returned to Trent some time after. The day he was to arrive thither, the cardinal came out of the city as though to take an airing, accompanied by a great number of prelates, &c. and coming up to him, received him with inexpressible tenderness; which occasioned much speculation, whether this was only an accidental meeting, or done on purpose †.

Reflect, worthy Isaac, I beseech thee, on the odd conduct of mankind. Persons who attended upon their chief, in order to go and meet an infamous Catamite, obstinately persist in refusing to permit a set of honest people to marry. Could they have desired a stronger example, to demonstrate to them the evil which arises from the celibacy of priests, than the adventure to which they were eye-witnesses.

Cardinal del Monte had yet vastly great obligations to another pope (Julius II.) who had a still greater itch this way. In his time, it was dangerous for young noblemen to go to Rome, they not returning from it with the same virtues they carried thither. According to several historians, this pope violated, in the strongest manner, the laws of hospitality. "We read, say certain authors, in a piece writ by some divines of Paris, that two young gentlemen were forced by him; they having been recommended by queen Ann, wife of Lewis XII. to the care of the cardinal of Nantz, in order that he might conduct them to Italy \*. If this reproach be

† This is one of those strokes which makes bigots exclaim against the Jewish Spy; but I would only ask them whether I have forged this story. Father Paul is my voucher. May not I be allowed to transcribe his words, and what all historians, whether protestants or catholicks, who have not been sold to the court of Rome have transmitted to posterity.

\* Wolfius, *Lectio. Memorabil.* Tom. ii. pag. 21. Du Pleſſis, *Mistère d'Iniquité*, pag. 58.

just, the young persons had better have travelled to Tartary than to Rome. Among the former, they would have been in danger only of losing their eyes; but among the latter they lost their honour.

Persons don't run any such hazard, dear Isaac, in London. The English bishops have so much to do in their own families, that they have no time to amuse themselves with their neighbours. The superintending of a church, and the contenting a wife, employs so much time, as leaves none for indulging the looser passions. However, I would not swear but some of the archbishops of Canterbury may have had bastards; but no such thing was yet ever heard of; and as the clergy have so easy an opportunity of getting children in a lawful way they have no inclination to raise up an illegitimate posterity. This seems to have been always pretty much their taste; for at the time that the Nazarene prelates consented to live a life of celibacy, several of those in England refused to submit to that law. One Geraldus who lived in the XII. and XIII. centuries, affirms that the prelates used to marry at that time in Wales\*.

An author of still greater eminence relates the same concerning the clergy of Britany†. One particular the Nazarenes cannot doubt of, and which is attested by one of their greatest divines, is that, in Ireland, eight bishops, successors to one another, were all married at the time that they exercised their pontifical functions§.

It was not therefore until they were absolutely forced to it, that the English and Irish prelates would consent to live unmarried; and therefore, the instant they had an opportunity of getting wives,

\* See the Treatise de Illaudabilibus Walliæ, inserted in Anglia Sacra. Tom. ii. pag. 450.

† Hildebert, bishop of Mans, an author of the XIIth century, quoted by Geraldus Cambrensis, Epist. LXV. pag. 151. Tom. xxi. of the Biblioth. Patrum.

§ Jam octo extiterunt ante Celsum Viri uxorati, & absque ordinibus, litterati tamen. Bernardus in Vit. Mal.

they no longer had recourse to those of their neighbours. When Henry VIII. quarrelled with the court of Rome, by shaking off the yoke of the Italians, he attempted to reform the abuses which he supposed prevailed in his kingdom; and getting himself to be proclaimed head of the church, he revived the ancient custom.

Had this prince acted always as judiciously, he would have merited the highest elogiums. It shews the highest wisdom and judgment to abolish all such pernicious laws as have no other authority but the most absurd prejudices. Since marriage is so frequently recommended in scripture; since man is naturally prone to vice, and that he finds a remedy for it, in taking a careful wife; how comes it to pass that the Nazarenes, who believe in the same scriptures as we do, should have established a custom that is productive of so many crimes? Their priests used to marry till the XII. century: Wherefore then should a custom that is founded on good sense be laid aside? Or, when that custom was abolished, why did not those, who presided in governments, when they were sensible of the advantages accruing from that custom, did they not revive it, and even they had been guilty of a fault, instead of burning those who insist upon the necessity there is that the clergy should marry, as though they advanced some doctrine in opposition to the existence of the Deity? The folly of the Nazarenes, dear Isaac, is our glory; let us leave them therefore in their blindness.

May thy health increase, dear Isaac, live contented and happy.



## LETTER CLXXIX.

Celibacy in the priesthood considered as a pernicious injunction.—An account of the rise and progress of the sovereign power of popes.—Some instances of the pride, insolence, and tyranny of the popes.—Luther and Calvin greatly shook papal power.

ISAAC ONIS, to AARON MONCECA

Grand Cairo.—

**T**HY last letters, excellent Monceca, gave me great pleasure. I am as persuaded as thou canst be, how necessary it is to permit priests of all religions to marry. This is the only expedient can be found to check the course of the enormous vices that creep into societies of men, who, attempting to raise themselves above their nature, after they have opposed the passions for some time, immerse themselves at last in the most dissolute excesses; and proceed to greater lengths in their debaucheries, as they are not possessed of any antidote against them. The example of the Nazarene monks, and the stories which are daily told of their scandalous actions, are evident and indisputable proofs, how absolutely necessary it is not to burthen mankind with such laws as are entirely repugnant to reason, and directly opposite to nature.

I greatly applaud the English prelates for shaking off a yoke, of so severe and pernicious a nature as that of celibacy; but I fancy, that the desire of having a lawful wife was the reason, which prompted the English prelates to separate from the pope of Rome. The ascendant which the latter had gained over the former, and the haughty manner in which they treated them, prepared the clergy in question, who were grown weary of so heavy a chain, to break from it; and the instant the English found a favourable opportunity for this, they embraced it with pleasure.

I know

I know not, dear Aaron, whether ever you reflected attentively on the amazing power, which the popes of Rome had raised themselves to, in the past ages, not only over the clergy, but likewise over kings and emperors. It was so great, and carried to so exalted an elevation, that it was impossible for it not to totter by its astonishing height, and at last sink under its own weight.

I compare the power of the sovereign pontiffs to that of the ancient Romans, and find an exact resemblance in them. The popes were at first only pastors, and equal in dignity to the heads of the other Nazarene churches. The Romans, under their kings, were neither richer nor more powerful than the rest of the nations of Italy. During the time of the commonwealth they subjected, by insensible degrees, not only their neighbours, but half the globe. At last, this grandeur became eclipsed, insensibly, under the emperors; and was always diminishing.

The same happened to the Roman pontiffs. When the emperors had entirely abandoned the city of Rome, the former began, by the absence of the sovereigns, to acquire a considerable credit in Italy, which however increased but slowly; for, during a long course of years, the popes were always elected, or their elections were always confirmed by the emperors of Constantinople. But when the Alani, the Burgundians, the French, the Picts, the Saxons, the Vandals, and the Visigoths, possessed themselves either of Gaul, or Great-Britain or Spain; the Grecian monarchs looking upon the Western provinces as given up to plunder, applied their whole endeavours to the preserving of the East; and though they still preserved a considerable part of Italy, the popes, by means of these various resolutions, had gained a considerable share of authority in those countries. It nevertheless was balanced by that of several petty tyrants, who, under a specious show of obedience to the emperors of Constantinople, enjoyed, in effect, all the privileges of sovereignty.

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The Lombards having entirely destroyed what remained of the power of the Grecian monarchs, the popes were then elected only by the people. Some time before the exarchate of Ravenna expired, Constantine III. seeing he enjoyed no more than a vain shadow of authority in Rome, permitted the inhabitants of that city to make choice of a pontiff without waiting for his consent; and it is this period, dear Monceca, that we ought to consider as the first æra of the papal grandeur. They learnt, by insensible degrees, to take advantage of the commotions which broke out. They even were as fortunate as the consuls of the Roman commonwealth; they dethroning kings, bestowing empires, often changing the whole face of Europe; and after having carried the terror of their arms as far as Alexander the Great, they would be adored after the same manner. The greatest monarchs prostrated themselves before them. But this humility not appearing abject enough to some of those haughty prelates, they added contempt to haughtiness; and behaved with greater pride towards the Nazarene princes, than the generous Romans towards such captives as adorned their triumphs.

One of the popes insolently set his foot on the head of an emperor, whilst he was kissing his slipper; and kicked off his crown, to shew that it was in his power to take it from him whenever he pleased. Another pope shewed but too evidently by the calamities he brought upon one of the emperors, that the Roman pontiffs were able to dethrone the most powerful monarchs. The pope in question (Gregory VII.) having had some contests about the electing of bishops, with this emperor, Henry IV. he excommunicated him, divested him of the imperial dignity, freed all his subjects from their oath of allegiance; and offered all his dominions to any persons who should think fit to take possession of them\*.

\* The famous Bacon observed very justly, that heresy was not commonly the motive which prompted the popes  
Were

Were such anathemas to be published in this age, they would not be regarded in any manner. They would only shew still more evidently the ambition of the court of Rome; and the magistrates would immediately invalidate decrees which should presume thus to attack their sovereign. The veil which before covered the eyes of the common people, is partly taken off; and most of the Nazarenes have now got the better of that mistaken awe with which they before beheld excommunications. They then were so powerful, that the ill-fated Henry fell a victim to them; and the hatred of the clergy brought him to his grave.

No one can read the misfortunes of that prince, even in the Romish historians, without feeling the strongest motions of anger and indignation, to see the extravagant height to which superstition and meanness have been carried among mankind; and how amazingly they degraded the majesty of their sovereigns. "The answers of this bull, says a Romish writer\*, had so much efficacy, that a son, and not a stranger, seized upon his father's dominions. A sad spectacle indeed; by which, however, you

to excommunicate kings, but that it was owing to temporal interests. However, the Roman pontiffs endeavoured to cover their ambitious pretences with the specious mask of religion. But why are not all kings made subservient to the advantage of the church, when he whose office it is to protect them, may stretch them as much as he pleases? *Evolvantur historię & videatur, quę fuerint causę principum excommunicatorum; & quidem istius tumoris, quo reges fuerunt exauthorati seu depositi. Non solum id factum est propter hæresin & schisma, verum etiam propter vocationem & invellituram episcoporum aliarumque personarum ecclesiasticarum. . . . Nam, quid est quę aliqua ratione ad spirituale referri nequeat? Præsertim quando qui fert sententiam, casum pro arbitrio formare permittitur, Baconi orationes in parlamento, camera stellata, banco regio, & cancellaria, habitæ,* pag. 1544, col. 2. Edit. Lips.

\* Palquier, *Recherches de la France*. liv. III. cap. xiv. pag. 209.

may



may judge how mighty the papal power was in that age. This, one would have imagined, could not but satisfy Gregory: Nevertheless, being still unsatisfied, he caused this emperor to be divested of his imperial ornaments by the bishop of Mentz, Cologne and Wormes. Having afterwards confined him close prisoner, he died; when the people of Liege were excommunicated by the pope, for having buried him in consecrated ground; but afterwards, in order to free themselves from it, they dug up his body, after which, it was carried to Spire, and deposited in a stone coffin, out of the church, as having died excommunicated."

If this incident, good Monceca, was not attested by writers of all religions, would it have been possible for posterity to believe it? Could one ever suppose, that an emperor, who reigned half a century, who fought a great number of battles, triumphed over the greatest part of his enemies, and acquired immortal glory, should have been treated so ignominiously by his subjects, at the instigation of a priest, whose implacable hatred could not be extinguished even by the death of his adversary.

In reading, dear Monceca, the history of the Roman pontiffs, it is not their pride, their ambition, in a word, the whole series of their criminal conduct that astonishes me. As favour, faction, and money, have always contributed more to their choice than probity and merit, it is natural that there should have been fewer good popes than bad ones. But I am all amazement, when I behold many whole nations not making the least use of their reason; but blindly following such impressions as are most repugnant to the light of nature. That a pope should be so ambitious as to attempt to dethrone a monarch; he, in that case, is a man who makes an ill use of his authority, in order to screen his crimes, which is a circumstance that very often happens. But that whole nations should consent to infringe all their duties; to give up their virtues, their honour and religion; and that too unprompted by

any particular motive of self-interest. This is what I can never reflect upon, without shuddering, to see the evils which are caused by superstition.

Whilst the power of the Romish pontiffs was risen to this extravagant height, England, dear Monceca, was one of the nations over which they had the greatest authority. They kept it in a kind of captivity; and this unfortunate country paid immense sums to the court of Rome. The revival of literature made the infatuated world open their eyes by insensible degrees. They at last discovered the follies which their ancestors had been guilty of; and found that the yoke which had been laid upon them was extremely severe. They did not, at first, dare to throw it off boldly; the dregs of superstition which still remained in them, the power of deep-rooted prejudices, and the want of favourable opportunities, keeping them from acting. But a happy chain of circumstances afterwards presenting itself, the whole face of Europe was changed on a sudden; the parties interested, who waited only for a propitious opportunity, did not fail to seize that which offered itself. A monk \* presented them with it; in fifteen or twenty years, he struck poverty so dreadful a blow, as shook the very foundations of it, and dispossessed it of a great part of the dominions over which its power before extended. Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, Saxony; and a considerable part of Germany, at last embraced his doctrines, and broke to pieces the idol they had so long adored.

On the other hand, John Calvin, an able French, ecclesiastic, less enterprizing than Luther, but as capable of executing any great designs, completed what the other had only begun; and introduced a reformation of doctrine and manners, not only in France, but even in Switzerland, the Low-countries, Scotland, and several other places. England, amidst all these revolutions, was not unactive. Love and indignation gave the finishing stroke to what

\* Martin Luther, an Austin Friar, of Wirtemberg.

the books of Luther and Calvin had only begun. Henry VIII. struck with the charms of Anne Bullen, and not being able to prevail with the court of Rome to dissolve his marriage, quarrelled openly with the Roman pontiffs; and in this manner destroyed popery in England.

The new opinions, which so many nations had embraced, occasioned very warm disputes among the learned; and literature gained prodigious advantages by these contests. Every individual was desirous of enlightning his mind; all sorts of people devoted themselves to study; and it was then that the genius and jargon of the schoolmen disappeared. The papists were reduced to the necessity either of opposing good books to those of their adversaries, or of seeing them triumph in every respect. To do this, divines were obliged to write intelligibly; and they found themselves indispensibly forced to abandon their old master. This completed the inlightning of mens minds, since every one, by that means was able to form a clear judgment of what he perceived, till then, no otherwise than by the eyes of monks and priests; and this additional splendour was a farther disadvantage to the authority of the popes. They were upon the brink of losing all France; and it cost them no little struggles, during a long course of years, to preserve their former authority in it; though, of all the kingdoms which recognize it, there is no one in which their power is so imperfectly established, as in France.

The French dreaded greatly the politicks and artifices of the court of Rome. In all ages, and even in those in which all Europe trembled under the pontifical yoke, the French have always adhered to their kings, and not permitted any incroachment to be made upon their privileges. It is true indeed, ever since the Jesuits have been settled among them, these have corrupted great numbers, several of whom were clergy, who forgot that they were Frenchmen; and are ready, at all times, to sell their native country to the popes. But the parliaments,

Ministers, the ministers of state, the nobility, and even the people, have not changed their opinions: So that were the court of Rome to insist upon any point which might displease the French king, all his menaces and fulminations would not be heeded. They never were much regarded in France. And even the French have sometimes punished, with great severity, all the faults which the popes committed with regard to their country. Lewis XIV. how little soever he might favour such opinions as clash with popery, raised, even in the midst of Rome itself, a monument which must reflect eternal dishonour on the Romans. However, after letting it stand some years, he, through an excess of clemency, permitted it to be thrown down. It is no wonder that this monarch should have acted with so much vigour, at a time when the papal authority, with regard to temporal matters, was considered as an absurd chimera. But the contest which king Philip the Fair had with Boniface VIII. at a time when the pope made so many sovereigns tremble, shews evidently, that the Roman pontiffs have had, in all ages, but little authority over the French monarchs. This prince who was engaged in a contest with the pope with regard to the nomination to certain benefices, received the following letter from him.

„ BONNIFACE, bishop, servant to the servants of God, to Philip king of France. Fear God, and keep his commandments. We will have thee to know that, in things spiritual, and temporal, thou art subject to us. Thou hast nothing to do with the collation to benefices: And if thou hast presented to any, we revoke the donation, and declare it void; and to conclude, declare, that all who think otherwise are fools and madmen. Given, &c.”

To this gentle letter Philip the Fair returned the following answer.

“PHILIP, by the grace of God, king of France, to Boniface, who assumes the name of sovereign pontiff, wisheth no health. Know, most supreme simpleton,



that we acknowledge no person with regard to temporalities. We collate to such prebends and benefices as we have a right to do; and will take care that those whom we present to them shall receive their due stipends; firmly persuaded that none but fools and madmen can dispute this power with them."

It is certain that a prince who wrote in this manner, no ways dreaded the fate of the emperor Henry IV.

May thy health increase, good Monceca, live contented and happy.

## LETTER CLXXX.

Concerning the parliament of England, and of the English constitution in general.—A view of the governments of different nations; and with political and historical observations thereon.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London—

**I** have not yet mentioned any thing to thee, friend Isaac, concerning the parliament of England. It is to this august assembly that the nation owes its happiness and liberty. Had it not been for the parliament, the kings would have been despotic long since; for as there would have been nothing to check their wills, they doubtless would have usurped absolute authority. When I consider the different forms of government established in Europe, none of them appears to me so perfect as that of England. And indeed, it unites together all the qualities requisite for making a people happy, and the sovereign powerful, so long as he is just.

All legislators, who have endeavoured to lay the foundation of a well-regulated government, and settle it upon such laws as might secure the liberty of the people, found that it was necessary the authority of the sovereign should be modified and restrained by the remonstrances, and even by the

credit of the principal men in the nation, who served as a mediator between the prince and the people; might preserve the prerogatives of the one, and protect the liberty of the the other. So long as the king does not endeavour to make any encroachment on the privileges of the nation, he is absolute; but, the instant he attempts to destroy them, the parliament never fails to oppose his designs.

One would imagine, at first sight, that a king is not so absolute in London, as in Madrid or Paris: But we find, upon a closer examination, that whenever he is just, he is as absolute as the grand signior. What is the duty of a king? To cause the laws to be put in execution, to reward the virtuous, to punish the wicked, and to endeavour to make both himself and his people happy. No monarch in the world is invested with more power, for executing all the things above mentioned, than the kings of England.

As princes, in this country, are absolute here, only in proportion as they are just and virtuous, their authority depends on the blessings they shower down on their subjects. Is it possible for any thing to be more prudent and judicious than this? The power of the English monarch seems to resemble that of the Deity. As kings are the representatives of God upon earth, it was thought that the former ought never to be the authors of evil. In order to strengthen them in the best manner possible, against the frailty of nature, a parliament was instituted; in order for it to represent to them in the strongest, and at the same time most respectful manner, the errors they may fall into.

The wisest legislators have been sensible, that it was of the highest consequence not to deify the caprices of monarchs: They knowing, that it would be unjust to make the felicity of millions of people depend on the whim of one single person. "Among the several new establishments, which were very various (says Plutarch) of Lycurgus, the greatest and most considerable was that of the

“ senate, which, as Plato observes, being blended  
 “ with the too absolute power of kings, and  
 “ having an equal authority with them, was the  
 “ chief cause of the moderation and safety of the  
 “ state, which was always fluctuating ; and some-  
 “ times inclined to the tyranny of kings, and  
 “ at others, towards the democracy of subjects.  
 “ For this senate was a medium, a sort of balance  
 “ to maintain an equilibrium, and fix it upon a  
 “ solid foundation ; the twenty-eight senators, who  
 “ composed that assembly, siding with the kings,  
 “ when the pope aimed at too much power ;  
 “ and strengthening, on the other hand, the party  
 “ of the people, when the king endeavoured to  
 “ govern with arbitrary sway \*.”

Lycurgus was not the only legislator who was  
 sensible how absolutely necessary it was to preserve  
 an equilibrium. Solon imagined, that a city could  
 not be happy, except magistrates were as subject to  
 the laws, as private persons to magistrates †. In  
 his opinion, the usages established ought to be  
 such as keep an equilibrium between the people and  
 the prince. This sage did not perceive, that men  
 act often in a very different manner from what they  
 ought to do ; and that it is absolutely necessary there  
 should be a superior power, which may force them  
 not to swerve from those laws that form the bond  
 between the sovereign and the subject. In this  
 manner they each secure their mutual felicity.  
 When the people are certain that their liberties  
 will never be destroyed, the monarch is sure to  
 enjoy undisturbed tranquility, except he forgets  
 the obligations by which he bound himself, he  
 then has no one to complain of but himself, for  
 any calamities that may befall him, since they were  
 all owing to his restlessness and his turbulent spirit

\* Plutarch's lives, Vol. I.

† Solon, inter septem sapientum, & eorum qui iis commu-  
 merantur, apophthegmata, consilia, & præcepta, &c. Pag. 13.

A prudent monarch, though there should be nothing to check his will, ought never to attempt to enlarge his prerogatives by force, violence, and injustice. That prince who is desirous of enjoying a happy reign, ought to win the hearts of the people, by the lustre of his virtues, rather than by the power of his arms. "Nothing is so seldom seen, says one of the wise men of Greece, as a tyrant who grows old on the throne." And indeed, friend Isaac, if we consult historians, whether ancient or modern, we shall find that most bad princes met with very calamitous disasters. To pass over Nero, Caligula, Domitian, and such like, and to take a view only of the later ages, how unfortunate were Henry III. King of France, and Philip II. of Spain? The former was dispossessed of half his dominions, and afterwards assassinated by a friar; and the latter, by his cruelties, lost all the provinces which now form the commonwealth of Holland.

Such laws as prescribe bounds to the power of kings are the security of it. Seldom a century passes, but some astonishing revolution is seen in countries governed with despotic sway. At a time when it is supposed that an arbitrary power is secured by the precaution employed, commotions immediately break out, which surprize the world. Absolute power is like a wide-extended calm sea, that has not been agitated for a long time: The long calm it has enjoyed seems to threaten a violent storm, and the more the winds have kept in their blasts, the more their return, and that in the most impetuous manner, may be justly dreaded. Seditions, commotions, and rebellions, start up from the centre of peace, and rise with the same force and impetuosity, as the North winds out of Eolus's caverns\*. When Henry II. concluded a peace, and married his daughter to Philip II. what

\* --- Ac venti, velut agmine facto, &c.

Virgil Æneid. Lib. I.  
man



man could have imagined to himself the calamities in which France was immediately involved, and continued so during thirty years together? Had the laws restrained the cruel proceedings of Francis II. Charles IX. and Henry III; had an assembly of wise men, zealous for the public welfare, equally checked the most hot-headed among the royalists, the protestants and the leaguers; and had these three contending parties been restrained by a powerful authority, who should have protected those who deserved the most favour; those princes would not have treated so very unjustly the Bourbons, the Colignis, and their adherents. All parties would have been equally forced to obey the laws; and such among them, as should have refused to submit to them, would have been justly punished, by the power of those who undertook to protect the nation, and who would have declared in favour of the most worthy. But, so far from this, nothing was able to curb the wild fury of the different parties. The states general of the kingdom had sold themselves to the duke of Guise: And Henry III. being abandoned by those who ought to have succoured him, was at last assassinated by his enemies. Had there been a power, to be a kind of mediator between him and his subjects, he would never have been reduced to so sad an extremity.

It might be objected that, as the states of Blois represented the parliament of England they ought to have produced the same effect. This indeed they would have done, if the members of those states had not forgot, not only their duty, but likewise their own interest; and if they had em-

The passage from Virgil in the foregoing page is thus translated

- “ The raging winds rush through the hollow wound,
- “ And dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground:
- “ Then settling in the sea, the surges sweep;
- “ Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep.
- “ South, East, and West, with mix'd confusion roar,
- “ And roll the foaming billows to the shore.

DRYDEN.

ployed

ployed their authority, to quell the tumults, instead of increasing them.

One would be apt to think that heaven, to punish the French for the ill use they made of their general states, permitted them to be intirely suppressed. In the manner they were corrupted, so far from continuing to be of any service to their country, they only fomented divisions and commotions. Instead of labouring sincerely and to the utmost of their power, to raise the glory of their sovereign, and promote the happiness of the people, the several individuals thought of nothing but caballing, in order to get posts and preferments in opposition to their adversaries; or to decree such statutes as might be highly prejudicial to them. The parliament of England, on the contrary, strictly endeavour to follow exactly the laws of their institution; as their views are for the general good of the nation, little regard is paid to the venal designs of particular persons. This parliament is animated with the spirit with which Lycurgus wanted to fire that of Sparta. Hence they have nothing to fear, neither from the policy of monarchs, nor the insurrections of subjects; and thus it does not become either the dupes of the former, nor the sport of the latter.

Nevertheless different parties often arise in the British parliament. But though the members of it differ widely very often in opinion, they yet unite almost always in such particulars as relate to the glory and advantage of the nation. It was never known for any member of this illustrious assembly to propose ever putting to the vote, whether their country should submit to some foreign power. How greatly soever the whigs and tories might clash, and how much soever they may have seemed to favour the French, they yet were never so base as to invite Lewis XIV. to take possession of their kingdom. But the leaguers exerted their utmost endeavours to get theirs delivered up to the Spaniards, and consequently to bring the whole French nation in subjection to Philip II.

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The English, dear Isaac, deserve the liberties they enjoy; and are so much the more worthy of them, as they owe it to the care they took to preserve them. Their breasts all burn with the highest zeal for that celestial virtue; and even private persons give up their own interest, the instant they perceive, (or at least imagine they do so) that the particulars which favour themselves, may abridge the privileges of their country. Are we, after this, to wonder, that a people who have so noble, so generous a way of thinking, should enjoy a form of government much more perfect than that of other nations? Laws are influenced, not only by the extent of the genius of the legislators, by whom they were framed, but likewise by the courage and greatness of soul of those who put them in execution.

If a parliament was to be instituted in Italy, and to enjoy the same privileges with that of Great Britain, the members of it would possibly often debate, concerning what time of the year it would be proper for processions to be made; and at what a clock matins or vespers ought to be sung. If different parties were to be formed in this assembly, different contests would doubtless arise in it: But we certainly should never see such an Italian parliament divided, about this glorious design, viz. of making their country the arbiter of the rest of the European powers, or of maintaining and spreading their trade.

For these three years together, the whole senate of Genoa have spent all their time in enquiring into the particulars of a murder, and have not yet been able to determine that affair. It was to no purpose that they set a price upon baron Newhoff's head; that pretended monarch is still living; and laughs at their impotent rage\*. How wide a difference, dear Isaac, is there between these Italians

\* Vivit, imo vero vivit; - - - non ad deponendam, sed ad confirmandam, audaciam. Cicero, Orat. prima in Catilinam.

and those of ancient Rome! The Romans endeavoured to vanquish their enemies by greatness of soul, rather than by force of arms. As to the Genoeze, they do not scruple any attempts, provided they may be successful †. And they even would not be ashamed to employ the means made use of by the old man of the mountain.

I will confess to thee, dear Isaac, that I think it shocking to set, in this manner, a price upon a man's head, who may be attacked sword in hand. If such an abuse ought to be tolerated on any occasion, it is when a rebellious subject stirs up a whole nation against their sovereign, and reduces him, by that means, to so fatal a necessity. Henry III. for instance, was absolutely forced to treat, in this manner, the Guises, who, were going to seize upon his crown. But when the like conduct is observed with regard to a man who is not bound by any oath, nor under any obligation, it is then such an infamous action as the most refined subtleties of politics can never excuse. I would ask what law forbids baron Newhoff to be an open enemy to the Genoeze? Are there any ties which call upon him to submit to their wills? Is he bound by any contract, by a convention? By none. It is a foreigner who declares war against them. If they endeavour to make him repent of his boldness, and pursue him with fire and sword, nothing can be more natural: But for them to attempt to get him assassinated, this is so very shameful a way of acting, that none can approve it but such as imagine guilt no longer ought to bear that name, when it is the effect of politics. To maintain such an opinion, would degrade the majesty of kings; would make them a set of men who are prompted to good or evil actions only as they may promote their interest; it is extirpating entirely courage, greatness of soul, and true virtue. Thou hast imbibed, excellent Isaac, too pure a morality

† Dolus, an Virtus, quis in hoste requirat.



not to condemn so pernicious and detestable an opinion: And thou, doubtless, thinkest, that whoever commits a crime, in whatever station he may be, fails in his duty to Heaven, to his fellow creatures, and to himself.

Enjoy thy health, good Isaac; may thy days be contented and propitious.

## L E T T E R   C L X X X I.

A description of the manners and customs of the Bedoins who inhabited the ruins of Cyrene; from whence the author takes occasion to fall into the argument concerning innate ideas.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

Tripoli.—

**C**Uriosity prompted me, worthy Monceca, to undertake a journey, during which I had frequent occasion to reflect on the misery of mankind. I set out some time since for Tripoli, to go and visit the ruins of Cyrene. Several Arabians, whose chief food is milk and barley meal, inhabit those ruins. Their manners are as pure as their diet is simple and frugal. They contemn riches, carefully practise the laws of hospitality, and have no other employment but that of looking after their flocks. If they were not so indolent, we might consider them as true philosophers, who sensible of the insignificancy of the treasures which men so greatly search after, are able to restrain their desires, and wish only for such things as are necessary. But, so surprizing is their indolence, they never sow but just the quantity, which may support them during a year, whence it sometimes falls out, that the harvest not answering their expectations, they are in want; and by that means are obliged to barter some of their cattle, in order to procure the barley they want.

The Arabians profess the Mahomedan religion, they nevertheless have several usages that very much resemble ours; and it is very probable that many of their customs are borrowed from the Jews. On Fridays they light up, in their tents, lamps like to those we make use of, in our houses, on the Sabbath-day. They never eat of any viands prepared by persons of a different religion from themselves; which the Turks of the Levant, and the Africans, do not scruple to do. Nay, some of the last-mentioned do not refuse such meats or drinks as are forbid by the law; they considering this precept as an advice, not as an order. I am of opinion, worthy Monceca, that these Bedoins\*, borrowed their customs from those of the ancient Jews who were dispersed in Ægypt, and over the coasts of Africa, after the destruction of Jerusalem and Bitter. The ruin of this last mentioned city proved still more fatal to the dispersion of our ill-fated nation, than that of the capital of Judea.

At some leagues distance from Cyrene, a forest of a great extent was found, inhabited by several nations that profess no religion; and who, like to the beasts of the field, follow blindly the impulses of their passions. It is affirmed that they are directed and governed wholly by instinct. Among these people, as we are told, sons enjoy their mothers, fathers their daughters, and brothers their sisters. They know no such distinctions as those of king, magistrate or superior. The strongest man is the most dreaded. They go almost naked, and have no other dress, to secure themselves from the inclemencies of the weather, but the skins of goats they kill, and of which they make themselves a kind of cloaks; and for this purpose they only dry them in the sun.

When we consider attentively, dear Monceca, the manner of living of those barbarians, what ought we to think of the opinion of such philosophers

\* A sort of Arabs.

as so boldly contend for innate ideas? I would only ask them, to what purpose are all their fine-spun metaphysical discourses, since they are all contradicted by experience?

Is it not surprizing, that a man should pretend to argue against a real thing, and upon no other foundation than this, viz. that its reality does not agree with the system he had formed in his imagination? Ought not philosophers to own frankly, that whenever a thing is demonstrated by experience, it is absurd to search for reasons to combat it? But men of great genius sometimes fall into this mistaken conduct. There is no follower of Descartes or Mallebranche but is firmly persuaded, or declares he is so, that the soul has innate ideas, which enable it to distinguish easily between good and evil, virtue and vice. When this obstinate philosopher is told, that what is looked upon as vicious in one country, is considered as laudable and virtuous in another; he either is contented with denying the truth of this evident fact, or has recourse to a trifling subterfuge; and imagines he makes such a reply as is unanswerable, by saying, that men stifle, by their depraved education, those innate ideas, and prevent the effects of them.

Without attempting to demonstrate the insignificance of those ideas, which are never of the least use to the soul; I assert, dear Monceca, that it is absolutely impossible there should be any innate knowledge in the understanding of man, which may enable it to distinguish between good and evil, virtue and vice. The Deity contented himself with indulging reason to mankind, by whose aid they may easily raise themselves to that degree of perfection which their condition requires. The light of nature is sufficient to make them distinguish between the profitable and the honest; and if they do not make this prudent distinction, it is owing to their not reflecting, or their being carried away by the force of their prejudices.

If there was some certain rule (innate in the soul) for distinguishing good from evil, it would be

be impossible, in spite of prejudices, that whole nations should violate them, calmly, and without the least fear of anxiety. It would be still more surprising, that the understanding should not sometimes perceive those ideas which were in itself. Is it not absurd to assert, that the mind should have a perfect knowledge of a thing on which it never reflected, and which never presents itself to it?

No man can deny, without refusing his assent to the most evident things, that all laws, which are looked upon as sacred in some countries, are rejected in others, and considered as vicious, and even sometimes as horrid and abominable ones. If the soul is endued with innate ideas at its birth, I would ask, friend Monceca, which of those ideas we ought to consider as such? Whether those which inspire the Caribbees, who roast and eat a man as they would a chicken? Or those of the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitors, who burn Jews in honour of the Deity? Or those of the English and Dutch, who permit every man to follow the dictates of his conscience, and punish such crimes only as disturb civil society? I am certain that a Cartesian would immediately answer, that there needs nothing more than common sense to perceive how horrid the Spanish and Caribbee customs are. But I would intreat him to tell me, of what use are innate ideas, since we must have recourse to reason in order to examine the reality of them, and judge of their validity. The light of nature is therefore sufficient to illuminate the human mind. If it be answered, that the light of nature acts only in consequence of these innate ideas, this objection may be easily destroyed; since nations the most polished, the most civilized, and the most witty, have entertained the falsest, and even the most horrid ideas, with regard to several fundamental practices of morality. "If any, says an illustrious author \*, can be thought to be naturally imprinted, none I think, can have a

\* Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Vol. I. Chap. iii. pag. 37. London 1716.



fairer pretence to be innate than the following, Parents preserve, and cherish your children. When therefore you say, that it is an innate rule, what do you mean? Either that it is an innate principle, which, upon all occasions, excites and directs the actions of all men: Or else, that it is a truth which all men have imprinted on their minds, and which therefore they know and assent to. But in neither of these senses is it innate. First, that it is not a principle, which influences all mens actions, is what I have proved by the examples before cited: Nor need we seek so far as Mengrelia or Peru, to find instances of such as neglect, abuse, nay, and destroy their children; or look on it only as the more than brutality of some savage or barbarous nations, when we remember, that it was a familiar and uncondemned practice among the Greeks and Romans, to expose, without pity or remorse, their innocent infants. Secondly, that it is an innate truth, known to all men, is also false.—— But these ideas (which must be all innate, if any thing of a duty be so) are so far from being innate, that it is not every studious, thinking man, much less every one that comes into the world, in which they are to be found clear and distinct.”

The partisans for innate ideas do not call to mind, worthy Monceca, that not only these principles, which they consider as most evident, are rejected by whole nations, but likewise by learned men who live among them, and are members of the same society.

All the Europeans look upon it as shameful and infamous, to copulate with a woman publicly: But a philosopher, a friend of mine rejected this idea as false and ridiculous. Will any person assert, that it was innate in his soul?

“Men, says he, make choice of the most solitary places to multiply their kind. They stay till night comes to propagate their species; and look out for the most serene days, - and the most open plain

plains to destroy them. A husband does not dare to approach his wife before his friends; and a soldier kills a very worthy man, who never gave him the least offence, in fight of an hundred thousand men, who approve and applaud the murder, and bestow the most glorious names upon it."

How odd soever the opinion may seem, viz. that it is not indecent to enjoy a woman in public, nevertheless whole nations have been seen, who, tho' they entertained the most exalted ideas of true glory, and honoured and cherished virtue, yet blindly followed the impulses of nature, and were not under the least restraint in actions wherein their wives shared. "The Nasamones, a great and populous nation in Lybia, says Herodotus\*, generally have several wives, and enjoy them publicly, almost in the same manner as the Massagetes, after thrusting a stick in the ground before them. It is their custom at weddings for the bride, on the nuptial night, to go and visit all the men invited to the ceremony, in order to lye with them; and every spark, after having dallied with her, gives her a present, which he had brought with him for that purpose. They swear by those men who were considered as the most just and virtuous among them, by laying their hands on their sepulchres†."

The bare reflection on this single passage will evidently prove the falsity of innate ideas. We thereby see whole nations revere virtue to so great a degree, as to deify those who adhered most strictly to its dictates: And, nevertheless, spite of these pure ideas, how absurd are some of their customs with regard to the marriage state! What then will become of these innate ideas by which mankind are able to distinguish things that are honest from such as are shameful? How emphatically soever Tully's autho-

\* Herodotus, lib. 4.

† Cicero de legibus, lib. I. fol. 331.

rity may be urged, to prove that honesty and virtue are naturally known to mankind; may it not be justly answered, that this Roman philosopher's thought may be thus explained, viz. That they are enabled to distinguish good from evil by reflection, but not from an innate principle?

If it should be objected, that the Nasamones, tho' they had the means of reflection, like other men, continued nevertheless in their blindness; and consequently, that the reflection, which I suppose to serve them as a rule for distinguishing good from evil, is as useless as innate ideas: To this I answer, that the soul may indeed not perceive certain things, when it had no knowledge of them; but that it is impossible for it to have a perfect and innate idea, and never make any attention to it. When a nation, clouded by prejudices, does not make use of their reason in certain matters, it is natural that their minds should not reflect on a matter whereof they have no knowledge, and which they cannot fully discover by insensible degrees. But the understanding which we ought to acquire by innate ideas differs widely. It ought to act with strength, since it is engraved, in indelible characters, on the understanding; and all prejudices, how strong soever, cannot eclipse it totally. It must necessarily throw out, from time to time, some sparks, and enlighten the soul, amid the gloom of the most barbarous customs. Now, nothing is so certain, as that the mind does not perceive any of those glimmerings. The Nasamones were as firmly persuaded, that it was a wise and pious action to cause the bride to lye with all the men who came to her wedding, as a Spaniard is convinced that it is a laudable action to cause a man to be burnt who refuses to kiss the pope's slipper. What have innate ideas to do in these distant customs? Why do they not act? If they do exist, of what use are they? It can hardly be asked why reflection does not act in its turn; but should such a query be offered, the reply would be this, that the reason why it does

does not act is because it does not exist yet, and has not been employed. But it is not the same with regard to innate ideas: They are planted in the soul; they are in it, and yet do not present themselves the moment in which they should appear with the utmost lustre.

I am very much surpriz'd, friend Monceca, how it was possible for so chimerical an opinion to meet with so many partizans; and I am still more surprized, that, among these partizans, some should be philosophers of the highest rank. I should be apt to believe, that the singularity of this opinion was the cause of its being patronized by the persons in question. It must be confessed, that there is a certain lustre in it that pleases at first sight: but the moment we examine it attentively, we are obliged to own, that all these innate ideas are mere chimeras of the brain; and that the Deity indulged mankind no other method, in order to distinguish good from evil, than the liberty of reflecting, and making use of their reason. It would be idle to pretend, that the natural light is as useless to them as innate ideas, since, spite of this precious gift, whole nations seem to enjoy no more than bare instinct. It is the same with human reason as with free-will: They may make use of it if they think proper, without being reduced to the necessity of employing it. From this liberty it is that the different degrees of wisdom, prudence, and virtue, which is found among men, arises.

What difficulty soever we may find in reconciling the condition of certain nations with the ideas we form to ourselves of supreme wisdom, we ought to submit, and conclude there are certain secrets which we are not allowed to pry into. If the Caribbees are so stupid as to feed upon the prisoners they take in war; if the inhabitants of Zocotora kill their fathers when afflicted with a dangerous sickness, or far advanced in years, we may suppose that it was in their power to have known by reflection, how widely their maxims differed from true equity. "We shall have no



cause," says a famous author\*, "to complain of our knowledge, if we apply our minds to what may be of service to us; because in this case, it may be of great use to us."

Those men, most worthy Monceca, who plunge into the greatest disorders, ought to blame themselves for it. We can scarce doubt but that there are certain practices, the imperfections of which are known by the most barbarous nations. I am certain that all men, as soon as they have attained to years of discretion, are sensible that it is not just to do to others, what they would not desire to have done to themselves. And yet, so strong are their passions or prejudices, that they do not attend to their first reflections; and act agreeably to the customs established in the society whereof they are members. The Nazarenes consider murder as a crime; and yet, do they not daily murder one another, as though they were so many wild beasts? To what heights had they carried the practice of duelling! A quarrel between two men often caused the death of twenty others, who had never the least dispute. The like mistaken conduct prompts savages to devour their enemies. Methinks it is not so cruel to serve up the divided limbs of a human body at a feast, as to kill a man. Nevertheless, most nations have bestowed upon it the mistaken names of courage and intrepidity. The most civilized people have also fallen into this error: but will any one say, on this occasion, that they were deprived of the means for reflection?

Enjoy thy health, good Monceca, live contented and happy.

\* Locke.

## LETTER CLXXXII.

The Jesuits not permitted to reside in England.—  
Character of St. Ignatius, by Pasquier.—Ignatius  
compared with Mahommed.—Character of the Je-  
suits in general, and of their genius and politics.

AARON MONCECA TO ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

**T**HE Jesuits, dear Isaac, are forbid, upon pain  
of death, to reside in England. The govern-  
ment dreads their politics and dangerous affability;  
and have set every engine at work to secure them-  
selves from their machinations\*.

The fears of, and hatred in which they hold the  
sons of Loyola, reflects as much honour on them, as  
that which the Nazarens bore to Mahommed did on  
his conqueror. The rejoicings they made at his  
death, were as glorious as so many panegyricks. The  
cautious methods which the English take, to keep  
the Jesuits out of their country, is a perpetual enco-  
mium of their genius, as well as of their great skill in  
affairs of the most delicate nature.

We are surprized, excellent Isaac, when we re-  
flect on the astonishing progress they made in a very  
short time; and can scarce conceive it possible for  
them, in the space of fifty years, to become so pow-  
erful, as to overturn part of Europe. And indeed,  
who would not be surprized to see an ignorant, en-  
thusiastic creature, assisted by four or five such crea-  
tures as himself, lay the foundations of the most pow-  
erful commonwealth established in these later ages.

\* ——— Aut ulla putatis

Dono carere dolis Danaum? Sic notus Ulysses?

Quicquid est, timeo Danaos, & dona ferentes.

Virgil. *Æneid.* II.

Think you the Grecians from your coasts are gone,  
And are Ulysses' arts no better known?

Trust not their presents, nor admit their horse.

Dryden.

What

What elogiums soever the Jesuits may have bestowed on their founder ; and how strongly soever they may have endeavoured to get him ranked among the most exalted genius's, the world is not imposed upon by their fabulous tales ; nor can their chimerical exaggerations lessen the surprize of people. It is so certain that their legislator was always a very ignorant creature, that at the time when the papal court was greedy to canonize him, the Parisians not only considered him as a frantic wretch, but even inveighed against him in full senate. The parliament of Paris were not displeased to hear the advocate, who spoke in the name of all the French divines, give the founder in question the worst of characters. " Ignatius," says Pasquer, in his plea for the university of Paris against the Jesuits\*, " was a Spaniard in the time of our fathers who had devoted himself to a military life. He happened to be wounded in the city of Pampeluna, when we were laying siege to it. Whilst he was under the surgeon's hands, he amused himself with reading the lives of the fathers ; for his ignorance was so great, that he could not raise his mind to more exalted subjects."

Here, excellent Isaac, we have an authentic certificate of Ignatius's ignorance, and the Jesuits themselves do not deny it. They only pretend that, after having retired from the world, he applied himself to study ; that he made a very great progress in it, and became as eminent for his learning as his piety. Though this should be granted them, it nevertheless will follow, that their founder was vastly ignorant ; as was proved by the body of the university of Paris, in presence of the chief magistrates of the kingdom. " Ignatius," says Pasquier again\*, got with some people. They travelled together to Rome and Jerusalem ; and, at last founded their retreat in Venice, a city which, being exposed to all the winds and waves

\* Pasquier, *Recherches de la France*, Livr. III. Chap. xliii. pag. 319.

† Ibid.

of the sea, is owned, by some Italian authors, to be the receptacle of many vices of the most odious kind. There they wore, during some time, the mask of hypocrisy, and pretended to a great sanctity and austerity of life; when perceiving that people began to approve of their superstitious practices, — they took the bold resolution to go to Rome, and there began to promulgate their doctrines. And notwithstanding that the greatest part of them were ignorant, not only of divinity, but likewise of the first elements of Grammar, they yet began to promise aloud two things; the one to preach the gospel to unbelievers, in order to convert them to the faith; the other, to instruct all persons in learning, gratis."

If it were true that Ignatius had as much learning as his disciples declare, I cannot conceive that the parliament would have permitted it to be called superstitious and hypocritical; or that the university, in full senate, would have supported and confirmed the speech made by their advocate. Would it not have been very surprizing, had an assembly of sagacious magistrates permitted persons to advance, without the least proof, particulars of so odious and blackening a nature? For there is no medium on this occasion. Either Ignatius was such as the Jesuits declare him to have been, or he was an hypocrite, and pretended zealot. If he had spent his life in virtue, a venerable assembly ought not to have suffered his memory to be aspersed by a scandalous plea: But if, on the contrary, he merited the invectives thrown upon him by Pasquier, the parliament should necessarily have been silent: But this silence, which is equivalent to an approbation, exists, and consequently Ignatius was an hypocrite.

Reason confirms this opinion; which is strongly corroborated by the rules and institutions of the Jesuits. If it be taken for granted, that the founder of the society was a man remarkable for his simplicity, good-nature and piety, and studious to shun all human pomp; we cannot conceive how it was possible for his disciples, if they had observed his rules,



rules, to become so great and formidable. But if it be once owned that he was a cunning knave, and an artful hypocrite, we no longer wonder that the Jesuits should have risen to such power and authority: For notwithstanding that Ignatius was very ignorant in the sciences, he yet might have excelled in politics; a circumstance which is sufficient to account for this sudden and boundless power to which the society rose, presently after its foundation.

I know not, good Isaac, whether I am mistaken in my conjectures, but there appears to me a vast affinity between Mahommed and Ignatius Loyola. Great faults were seen in both: Both equally affected enthusiastic inspirations; and both endeavoured, in the most artful and boldest manner, to give success to them. Both were utterly ignorant; and found the art, by their hypocrisy, to supply their want of knowledge: Both of them rose from very small beginnings; and both established empires, which have been very much aggrandized, by the ruin of a great number of princes, who fell the sad victims to them.

We therefore cannot, without being unjust, refuse the two legislators in question the elogiums they merit. Notwithstanding all the far-fetched exclamations, as well of the Nazarenes against Mahommed, as of the Jansenists against Ignatius, yet every impartial person will allow, that they were both illustrious knaves, who made a very artful use of enthusiasm and hypocrisy, in order to obtain their ends; and the more they are reproached with ignorance, the more it will redound to their glory. They must necessarily have been masters of the most profound politics, to be able to compensate for such an imperfection.

When a person is firmly persuaded, most worthy Isaac, of the least resemblance there is between the head of the Jesuits, and that of the Mahomedans, we are no longer surprized at the wonderfully rapid progress made by the society: The reason of this is found among the Turks: and, in perusing their history, we find in what manner a religion, ridiculously founded

founded on superstition and enthusiasm, but artfully supported by artifice and politics, may rise to a great height in a short time.

If we enquire attentively into the conduct of the Jesuits, we shall find that it bears affinity to that of the Mussulmen. They make use of the same methods to enlarge their sect; and, like them, endeavour to seduce mankind by fomenting their passions, or terrifying them by fear. If the attractive charms of a plurality of wives, and the inevitable power of the Ottoman arms, won Asia to the Mahommedan faith; the loose morality of the Jesuits, and the dreadful persecutions which those who opposed their opinions were made to suffer, at last brought over to them all those who refused, at first, to submit to Ignatius's institutions.

It is very easy to make an impression upon the minds of men, when they are attacked on their weak side. It is daily confessed, that no one ought to wonder that the relaxed and seducing opinions of Mahommed should have won over so many proselytes. Why then should any person be surprized, that those of Ignatius Loyola, when he preached up and supported in the same manner, should have made the like progress? In admitting the parallel between the Turkish and the Jesuitic politics, the mind easily unravels a mystery, which it could never discover, in supposing Ignatius to have been really indued with a spirit of piety. If he had been as humble as his followers pretend him to have been; as he was so extremely ignorant, he consequently would have founded, at most, an order like to that of the capuchins. Francis d'Assise was merely an enthusiast; and accordingly, all his followers were as silly and wrong-headed as himself.

As the credit and authority, which the society has acquired over the minds of many persons, is founded on the above-mentioned motives; when a person has at last discovered them, he no longer feels that astonishment, which the rapidity of their progress creates in the minds of those, who do not go to the bottom of

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of



of things. But I will sincerely own, that I cannot conceive how it was possible for the Jesuits ever to obtain the protection of crowned heads, as they are still, and have always been their most cruel enemies. If it be objected, that artifice, complacency, cunning, knavery and politics, pave their way to the favour of princes; I answer that these several qualities, according to the natural course of things, ought not to secure them from the indignation that should accrue to them from the opinions of their chief authors, which are also those of the society; and which undermine the power of sovereigns, and make them slaves to the Roman pontiff. One Charles Scribanus, rector of their convent at Antwerp, has publicly maintained in his *Theatrum Honoris*\*, that the pope might dispossess princes of their dominions at pleasure. This is the favourite opinion of the society, how contrary soever it may be to the tranquility of a people, and to that of sovereigns. It is yet less so than another opinion asserted by a numberless multitude of divines among the Jesuits, which permits subjects to rebel against their kings, and to violate the oath of fidelity they took to them, whenever they imagine there is any just reason for complaining of it†.

Is it not strange, excellent Isaac, that a set of men who maintain maxims so pernicious to princes, should yet meet with such favour from them; be their ministers of state, their directors, their friends and confidants? These are things we cannot comprehend till experience shall have proved the certainty of them; for it would be to no purpose to object, that the books in which these dangerous tenets are found

\* In which he had disguised himself under the name of *Clarus Bonarscius*, the anagram of his Latin name *Carolus Scribanus*.

† *Tyrannice gubernans lata sententia potest deponi a populo, etiam qui juravit ei perpetuam obedientiam, si monitus non vult corrigi. Emanuelis Sa Summa, de Summo Pontiff. Cap. LVIII. Rex ——— si non facit officium suum, cum aliqua justa causa eligi potest alius a majori parte populi. Emanuel Sa, ibidem.*

are the compositions of private persons, which therefore ought not to bring an odium upon the body. The reflections, which a Jesuit inserts in the writings published by him, ought to be considered as those of the whole society. They have the approbation of a great number of divines, appointed by the general of the order, who in his name and that of the whole society, adopt and patronize every thing contained in the book. No book, how monstrous soever it may be, that was writ by a Jesuit, but it is favoured with an authentic certificate, given in the name of the superiors. Mariana's execrable treatise has this advantage; and the following attestation is seen at the head of it, "I, Stephen Hojeda, visitor of the Jesuits in the province of Toledo, by the special power which I received from Claudius Aquaviva, or father general, permit the publication of the three books which John Mariana, a father of the said society, has writ, and which are entitled, Of The King, and his Institution; the work in question having been already approved by a considerable number of learned persons, distinguished by their merit, of our said society. In witness whereof I have writ these letters, subscribed with my name, to which my seal is affixed. From our college in Madrid, the fifth of December 1598. Signed, Stephen Hojeda, visitor.

As Mariana's morality is that of the general of the Jesuits, and of all those whom he appoints to examine the books published by Jesuits, is not the favour which the society has acquired at the courts of so many princes, a very surprizing circumstance? One might naturally imagine that such monarchs, as admit the Jesuits at their courts, are prompted to this rather from fear than inclination; and that they spare enemies whom they would be glad to extirpate. But have we not seen some kings entertain the strongest affection for them, and consider them as the chief pillars of their throne, and the support of their government? Though the enemies of the Jesuits publish ever so much against them, and charge them with crimes of the blackest dye, yet, if they will

speak sincerely, they must own that the Jesuits must be endued with a great superiority of understanding, to execute the designs formed by them. Those men must be great politicians, who can win the favour of persons whom they injure, and can artfully ward off the thrusts made at them so as not to be perceived. If we examine the greatest master-strokes of the ablest Machiavelists, and peruse relations of the most delicate negotiations, nothing will be found so hard to reconcile, as the vows made by the Jesuits, by which they bind and engage, themselves to obey implicitly all the commands of the Roman pontiff; whom they declare to have the privilege of dethroning monarchs; and the authority they enjoy in the courts of those king, whom they subject to the will of a priest? If we enquire what effort of genius is required, to reconcile things so opposite in their natures; or, at least, to prevent their not reciprocally prejudicing each other: Then, I say, we shall be sensible, how extensive the genius of the society must be. There is nothing, how difficult soever but they compass sooner or later: And the instant they form any enterprize, they are sure to go through with it, what obstacles soever may arise in their way. It is then indeed, when politics alone are not sufficient, that they make use of force and violence. But, in a word, they never fail to execute their designs one way or other.

The Jesuits were no sooner settled in France, but they vowed the ruin of the protestants, and at last completed it. But what rubs did they not meet with in their way before they compassed their ends; what mighty machinations were employed by them? When they saw Henry III. was reconciled to the king of Navarre, they, by their seditious sermons, stirred up a monk, who stabbed that ill-fated king. But upon their attempting to serve his successor in the same way, they met with such a misfortune as would have disconcerted the most intrepid genius's. However they surmounted this obstacle; and posterity will be surprized to hear that a powerful monarch should

recall into his kingdom his most inveterate enemies; heap the utmost favours upon them; and pitch upon one of them for his spiritual director. Jesuits are the only men whose prodigious politics can exhibit such extraordinary effects to mankind. Their return to France completed the ruin of their enemies. They gave them the first mortal wounds under Lewis XIII. and quite crushed them under Lewis XIV. The Jansenists met, insensibly with the like treatment. They have already put the ax to the root of the tree; and it is decreed that it must fall.

The more, dear Monceca, I study the history of the Jesuits, their maxims, and the rules prescribed to them by their founder, the more I applaud the wisdom of the English and Dutch, in not permitting them to come into their respective countries. It is necessary to set up a strong barrier against such powerful enemies; and even to shun the neighbourhood of them as much as possible. I consider Loyola's disciples as so many soldiers, who bear on their shields a Talisman, which gives them a certainty, whenever they have the advantage of fighting their enemies hand to hand, to vanquish them sooner or later. Every Jesuit is a skilful necromancer, armed with three poisoned darts, Politics, Hypocrisy and Violence. Whatever may be his situation, in what post soever he may be, he always finds out the secret to make use of one of those weapons. Woe be to those who happen to be wounded by them. Their wounds are as incurable as those of Philoctetes, and nothing but a Deity can heal them. The English are so firmly persuaded of this truth, that they have enacted a law, by which all such Jesuits as appear in their country, are sentenced to death: And England is the same with regard to the Jesuits, as the Island of Calypso was to the ancient Greeks.

Enjoy thy health, excellent Isaac; may thy days be contented and propitious. Above all, take care to have no contests with the Jesuits; and always call to mind, that if they are skilful knaves, they ought to be the more dreaded on that account.



## LETTER CLXXXIII.

A quotation from the Alcoran, touching the resurrection of the body, after death.— Onis's observations thereon, and upon the sentiments of the Christians in general, on that head.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

Constantinople—

**T**HOU wilt justly complain, excellent Monceca, of my silence; but this thou oughtest to excuse, on account of the multiplicity of business I have had upon my hands. I have perused with great pleasure part of the new books thou hast been so good as to send me. Those on philosophical subjects were extremely entertaining; and I gave myself up, for several days, to a thousand reflections which carried me away, as it were, from myself. And I was wholly taken up with certain ideas, whose connection I sought after. I endeavoured very assiduously to do this; and yet, I met with some which I found it impossible to reconcile with others.

Our rabbis, dear Monceca, assert, that we shall one day rise from the dead; and that every one shall resume the same body he had when in this sublunary world. This is the belief of the Mahomedans, as it likewise is of the Nazarenes: And therefore we may say, that the followers of all religions who worship one sole Deity, declare in favour of this opinion. They even prove the possibility of this from reason; and instance the power of the almighty which, as it created the world, will not find it difficult to give a portion of matter the same form it had before. All that the most learned, the most eloquent Nazarene divines say on this head, is not stronger nor more emphatical than what we read in the koran. Notwithstanding the many absurdities which occur in this book, it nevertheless exhibits, in a great number of places, an exalted idea of the Divine Majesty; and that wherein mention is made of the resurrection

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urrection of the dead is of that number. "Wherefore, (says the supreme Being, according to Mahomed) wherefore should not mankind arise? Do they not see the heavens above them, in what manner, we have built it, how adorned it? And that it has not one single imperfection? We have spread forth the earth, raised the mountains; and produced fruits of every kind, to manifest our almighty power. We have sent rain from heaven, and have given rise to gardens, to corn pleasing to the reapers, to palm-trees, some raised higher than the rest, in order to enrich the creatures. We have given life to the earth, tho' dead, dry and barren. The dead therefore shall arise out of their graves\*." No argument, in favour of the resurrection, can be stronger than this; and it would be impossible for the French, English, German, &c. divines, to produce more convincing reasons to this purpose. Could any better proofs be given, of the possibility of the execution of a certain thing, than to shew evidently, that he, who is supposed to execute it, has compleated and perfected a great number of things equally difficult.

How strong soever these arguments may appear, yet, when they are examined with care, they will be found more showy than solid. It is certain that the creator's power is boundless; that he is as able to annihilate and destroy matter as to create it; and that it is in his power to draw forth a new world from non-entity. But there are certain things which he cannot execute, because they interfere with his wisdom and greatness. He cannot produce a being as perfect as himself; he cannot be the author of evil; is not susceptible of passion, jealousy, hatred and fury. The wisest philosophers own, that he cannot change the essence of things; for instance, to cause a staff to be a staff without two ends; because that, the instant a thing has not two ends, it will not be a staff; God, for the same reason, would not cause a material thing to be without extension; every

\* Koran, chapter, of the thing judged, pag. 398.

thing that is material being necessarily extended. If this evident principle is admitted, we may easily find out very strong arguments against the following opinion, viz. "That at the general resurrection, all men will re-assume the same bodies in which they were lodged during this mortal life."

It must be considered that, at the beginning of the world, God created a certain quantity of matter, which afterwards was sufficient to form all the different work produced by him; so that what now forms trees, fields, mountains, men, &c. in Mesopotamia, formed four thousand years ago, the trees, fields, mountains, men, &c. in that country. To be convinced of this truth, we need but cast our eyes on what occurs in all countries. We there see the corn, and the rest of the plants, shoot up, which owe the increase of their bulk to the earth which feeds them. These afterwards increase the extent of the human body to which they serve as nourishment. Afterwards the men in question die, and are changed into earth, which serves, a second time, to give birth to fruits. Thus there is, in nature, a perpetual transmutation, whereby a certain quantity of matter is sufficient to produce all things that are forming daily. This being the case, I assert that it is physically impossible, that mankind should one day re-assume the body they formerly wore: For that which served to form the limbs of one man was employed, in like manner, in forming those of two thousand more.

To have a clear idea of this, we must consider what happens in a plain, where, after a bloody battle has been fought, thirty thousand men may be left dead in the field of battle. They are buried in the plain, which is thereby very much fattened. The year after, the plough-men sowing their corn, there is found in every blade, several particles of the same matter, which composed the bodies of the soldiers who had been buried; and those particles, being transformed into wheat, enlarge the limbs of a great number of persons. I will suppose that, among these, there  
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happens to be a native of Limousin in France, a great eater of bread, who, taking, for his share, a great quantity of that matter which, a little before, belonged to the foldiers, feeds upon it during a year, and encreases two inches in stature. I would enquire to whom this matter ought to belong, at a general resurrection? To the soldier? But then the case which held the Limousin's soul would be two inches too short; and if the Limousin should keep it, the soldier would be in the same distress. I shall go still farther, and carry the transmutation of matter to a second degree. If a hog should happen to eat the Limousin's excrement, and fatten himself with it during winter; several particles of the soldier will likewise get into the unclean animal in question. This a greedy Nazarene kills; eats afterwards a great quantity of it; and then dallying with a wife or a mistress, the most subtile particles of this hog, blended with a great many of those of the soldier, contribute to the forming of another man. To whom then will this body belong at the resurrection?

The same question may likewise be asked with regard to the bodies of most men; since a numberless multitude of them must necessarily be maimed, by reason of the great transmutation that must have happened in the matter of which they were composed. It might happen that Julius Cæsar might see his ears clapp'd to the head of some Monsignore, and his nose to the face of a courtesan. It would be to no purpose for him to say, "I am the victor of the Gauls and of Pompey; and subjected the whole universe. Is it fit that a hero of my rank should appear without a nose and ears; and that you petty pontiff in partibus, and you lewd woman, should bedeck yourselves with what belongs to me?" Methinks I hear the Roman prelate answer thus, in a haughty tone. "How insolent is it for a heathen to offer to contend for a thing with a Nazarene prelate? Avaunt, thou idolatrous profane wretch! Thy ears have too much honour done them in being set upon  
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my head. They had the happiness to be canonized an hundred years after my death. During upwards of a thousand they have been praised, and hymns have been chaunted in their honour. Would they have met with this good fortune, had they not belonged to me?" Were the Roman emperor to address the Courtezan, he would meet with the like rebuff. "Your most humble servant, would she say to him: I have the utmost regard for you, mighty Cæsar. I have frequently met with your statue in the villa belonging to the Medecan family, and in other country seats, whither I used to go and take the air with my gailants. I often heard you applauded, as a very great man; however, I cannot be so complaisant, as to appear before people without a nose, merely to please you. Enquire whether, among the crouds that are in this place, if somebody has not a nose to spare." Thus would poor Julius Cæsar be obliged to appear as a deserter. Thrice happy in getting off at so easy a rate; and in not being so far insulted, as to see his whole head contribute to the formation of the buttocks of some cardinal's porter.

I seek, friend Monceca, but to no purpose, for some means, to put an end to the confusion and perplexity of the souls whose limbs shall be maimed in this manner. Philosophy does not suggest a single one. Should it be answered that God, who created the universe out of nothing, will easily be able to invest these souls with bodies, this is a truth I shall readily grant. But then I may be justly allowed to conclude, that these new bodies will not be the same with those which we put off, at our leaving the world; and therefore the opinion, which asserts that we shall rise with the same body, must be false. Should it be answered that God will extend matter; and that, from a single atom of the earth, which formed a body, he will enlarge it so as to be sufficient for that purpose, I will still deny that these are the same bodies, because their essence will be changed; this new mater not being the same with that which

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was before : and God not being able to cause a thing which has been used, to have not been used, since it is not in his power to change the essence of things.

To set my idea in a clear light, I will suppose that there is no more than the body of one single man in the world. In the space of ten thousand years, God sends three hundred souls, successively, to inhabit it ; and at last, commands these several souls to reassume the body they dwelt in. In this case, either three hundred souls must be found lodged in a single body, or God must create two hundred and ninety-nine new ones. This is so manifest a truth, that all the vain subtleties of the schoolmen can never lessen the force of it ; and what arguments soever may be objected, it would be impossible to obscure a thing that presents itself so clearly to the mind.

I am firmly persuaded, dear Monceca, of the resurrection of the body ; but think that those make a random assertion, who pretend to determine exactly the manner in which it will happen. But why will any person assert, that we shall reassume the same bodies ? To what purpose is it to explain a mystery which we do not comprehend ? The Nazarenes, and particularly the papists, maintain obstinately this opinion ; and I pity them for it. They are taught, in their sacred books, that bodies will rise from the dead, for which reason they ought to admit this opinion. But why will they attempt to explain exactly the manner in which this will happen ? Wherefore, not satisfied with knowing that the soul will one day resume a body, do they pretend to fix the manner in which the Deity ought to act on that occasion ?

In all religions, dear Monceca, the force of the several errors, is the ridiculous curiosity which mankind have to dive into the mysteries of the Almighty. If a thing is revealed to them, only in part, they are eager to enquire the ways which the Deity will employ in order to bring it about. They ascribe their own

own weaknesses to the Supreme Being: And imagine that he ought to employ such methods as appear to them, the best and most natural. By this means they dishonour the Deity, and ascribe to him the most absurd actions, such as are most incompatible with his nature. Upon pretence of giving an exalted idea of his boundless power, they are for having him do things directly contrary to the immutable order which he himself has established, such as that of the general resurrection of the same bodies. They even sometimes proceed to such lengths, as to endeavour to apologize, from the power of God, for the most silly superstitions as well as for the most visible deceptions.

Did not John Ferrand, a Jesuit of Anneci, presume to maintain in a very voluminous work, concerning the worship of relicks, that, when several bodies of the same saint are found in different churches, they were thus multiplied miraculously by the Deity to increase the devotion of the faithful\*?

To prove this absurdity, he produces such arguments, as must appear shocking to every honest Nazarene: And I myself, tho' a Jew, will own that I blushed at this friar's impudence, and to see him thus debase the most sacred mysteries of religion. He makes such an odious comparison, as is highly injurious to the Deity; and that merely to shew how possible it is for the bodies of the saint-like persons in question to be multiplied. It is certain that this mystery was not so difficult to unravel as that of the

\* *Unum mihi sat erit in præsentia dicere, Supremum Numen suam procul dubio explicuisse potentiam in iis nominatim reliquiis multiplicandis, seu replicandis, quæ revera non nisi unæ secundum unitatem, & natura sua singulares existere poterant, ut sunt, verbi gratia, præputium, sanguis, aliaque id genus, quæ cum ad corporis Christi perfectionem, faciant, vel quæ cum ipso, vel ab ipso, traxerint originem, nec multiplicari esse, nec diu illibatæ seu integræ servari poterant, nisi divina vis mirabilem in modum accessisset. Idem in aliis permultis singularibus Christi divorumque reliquiis videre est. Joan. Ferrandi Disquisitio Reliquiaria, pag. 7.*

resurrection.

resurrection. He needed but to have frankly owned, that the efficient cause of the multiplicity of these relicks was owing to the avarice of the friars. It is on these occasions as with a famous wine. Every vintner will have some in his cellar, to bring custom to his house; and when it is all drunk up, he himself brews a fresh quantity. Does not every one know that half the vintners in Paris make their Burgundy in Surene\*. Most part of the relicks are picked up, at random, any where: And the bodies of a rope-dancer, or a player, often pass for those of St. Pacomius, or of St. Mathurin. Let us deplore, worthy Monceca, the blindness of poor mortals, who fall a sacrifice to knaves and impostors; and let us always endeavour to raise ourselves above vulgar prejudices.

Farewel, dear Monceca, live contented and happy.

## L E T T E R CLXXXIV.

The advantage and pleasure arising from being acquainted with the customs of different nations demonstrated.—The greatest philosophers have received very useful lights from this knowledge.—Without such knowledge, a politician cou'd not make any tolerable figure.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

London.—

I Shall soon leave England, dear Isaac, and will go and spend some days in Scotland. After this I will return to France; and believe that it will be an inexpressible pleasure to me, at my arrival in Paris, to be enabled there to make a just comparison between the manners, customs, and way of thinking of the French, and those of the English, the ideas of which will be still fresh in my memory. I am certain that this will furnish me with a thousand useful reflections, which I shall not fail to communicate to

\* A little village near Paris.



thee. Nothing can contribute more to the improving of the genius, and the cultivating of the understanding, than comparisons made between two nations ; since, by this means, we discover the most secret recesses of the human mind.

We perceive many weaknesses among some men, which we know to be such, because they are not masked ; and which are looked upon in several others, as virtues, because they are covered with an insidious veil. When we see a Frenchman studious of pleasing, to the utmost of his power, those with whom he lives, and bestowing the highest marks of civility and tenderness upon them, we imagine, at first sight, that a true and solid friendship is the characteristic of his countrymen. However, we find we were greatly mistaken, if we afterwards live among the English. We find that, notwithstanding their cold behaviour, their haughty and unpleasing air, they yet are excellent friends, if they declare themselves such ; and we perceive that what was considered among the French as a sincere attachment, is a mere ceremonial or custom ; and, if I may be allowed to make use of an old proverb, “ a faddle for all horses.”

On the other hand an Englishman, who was never out of his native country, fancies it to be the only region where intrepidity is found. He imagines that there is no man in other kingdoms who is fearless at the approach of death ; because he does not hear that there are people in Paris, Vienna, and Amsterdam who, grown weary of life, put an end to all their sorrows by a rope or a razor. But if this man, who is so strongly prejudiced in favour of his own country, travels some years into the different parts of Europe, he will soon change his opinion. He will find, at last, that there are brave men in all nations ; and that he gave the name of intrepidity to a frenzy which is pernicious, not only to those whom it attacks, but likewise to society.

It is therefore by a just comparison between the manners and customs of nations, that we are able to

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settle their true merit. That man, who is acquainted with but one nation, approves of an hundred ridiculous practices, which he condemns, as soon as he has familiarized himself with other countries. It is not surprizing that a Spaniard, brought up in the center of Galicia, should pay a superstitious worship to St. James. All persons about him do the same. He sees his relations, his friends, his countrymen, devote themselves to that pretended saint, from whom they expect the greatest succours; and he does not know that there are any persons in the world who think after a different manner. To overcome prejudices so strong as those imbibed by him, a superior genius is required; and even with this it would be extremely difficult for him to be made sensible of his mistake. How many would have been great men, had they been natives of London or Paris, and who never made a figure for want of their receiving some foreign aid; but by their residing for ever in the center of Lisbon or Madrid, were confined in the gloomy labyrinths of ignorance and superstition.

Learned men of the first class have been obliged, for a great part of their knowledge, to that which they had acquired of the manners and customs of foreign countries. When the modern philosophers attempted to discover the truth, they made great use of the hints which learned travellers had furnished them with. Locke and Bayle made great advantage of them; the former utterly to destroy the witty but chimerical system of innate ideas; and the latter to pull off the fatal veil of prejudices, and to destroy superstition so silly, and at the same time so dangerous to mankind. Descartes, Gassendi, and even Sir Isaac Newton himself, in a word all the able naturalists, have received great lights from the knowledge they had of the manners of different nations; and this has been of frequent service to them, either in experiments, or in their enquiries into the different tempers and hidden causes of the human passions.

If we examine all the sciences in particular it will be found, that in every one of them a knowledge of

the maxims and way of thinking of different nations is of great advantage ; but morality and politics seem to require that knowledge most. How would it be possible for a man to know the extent and limits of probity, virtue, and decorum, if he was wholly unacquainted with foreign nations ? How esteemed forever our fellow-citizens may be, it is certain that they are not possessed of all the moral virtues. Every country seems to have some qualities that are peculiar to it, and which must be sought for in it. They are never found in so exalted a degree of perfection in other nations. Should a person who was desirous of knowing the height to which politeness may be carried, continue an hundred years at Constantinople, he would never learn so much in that particular, as he would during six months abode in Paris. Would not that man, who was desirous of seeing frankness and sincerity in their utmost purity, do very wrong, should he travel to Italy for that purpose ? No, Switzerland is the place to find this. Would he habituate himself to a free, bold, and yet judicious way of thinking ; such as teaches men to give magistrates and ecclesiasticks their due, without permitting the former to become tyrants, and the latter inquisitors, should Portugal be visited for this purpose ? Surely not, but England. In fine, to know the whole extent of kindness, simplicity, candour, humility, charity, and the rest of the virtues, ought we to reside in Rome, or even in any part of Europe ? No, excellent Brito ; to see these virtues in their full lustre we must cross the seas, and go to seek them in Pennsylvania, the happy colony of the quakers, whence they one time or other may take their flight. Who can tell what revolutions may happen in the hearts of men ; such astonishing ones are brought about daily, and such surprizing changes are wrought in them, that no person can assure us that the best regulated and most virtuous societies will long continue such. It is much the same with kingdoms as with private persons. A man should be prudent and vir-

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uous during thirty years, and afterwards lose, in an instant, the fruit of so much probity. In how calm and unruffled a state did the Swiss cantons live during a long course of years; and yet afterwards, abandoning themselves to a spirit of frenzy, they took up arms, and endeavoured to cut one anothers throats.

If the knowledge of the manners of various nations, worthy Brito, is of use to those who apply themselves to the study of morality, it is still more to such as are obliged to search into the hidden mysteries of politics. A prince can never attempt any mighty atchievements, nor can even live undisturbed in his dominions, if he is not acquainted with the character, the maxims, and customs of the nations who surround him. The instant he has instructed himself in these particulars, he knows how he ought to behave towards them. "I have nothing to fear," would he say, "from such a nation". They love peace much more than war. They are the dupes of priests, and divided into several states, who have their particular interests. The † other is obliged, through necessity, to court my alliance. They have no money, their provinces are unpeopled, their inhabitants detest war, or are too indolent to love to take up arms. I consequently need not be under any apprehensions from this people, since they are unable to atchieve any considerable enterprize, unless assisted by me. There are three more nations, with whom I may have some contest. The first ‡ is extremely numerous. Their troops are inur'd to military discipline, but then they are poor; and it is well known that war cannot be carried on without money. Even in a second campaign, if they are not succoured, they are forced to strike up a peace, or to sustain a considerable loss. The second people || are rich, and sovereigns of the sea. An inveterate hatred has made them, in all ages, my enemy. They are valiant, intrepid, and I might justly stand in fear of them, were they as strong

\* The Italians. † The Spaniards. ‡ The Germans, The English.



in soldiers, as in sailors. As their greatest strength consists in the number of their ships, and that these cannot achieve any great land conquests, I need not be under any apprehensions from them. So long as they arm against me, without any allies, they will be one of my inconsiderable enemies; but they may be of infinite prejudice to me, should they be united with others, in which case they would become my most formidable enemy. The third nation \*, though less splendid and august than the last mentioned, might nevertheless annoy me more. They are immensely rich; they alone are able to defray the expences of a long war, and to pay the armies of all their allies. They are possessed of some strong holds in the neighbourhood of my dominions, and may, at the very opening of a campaign, encamp on my frontiers. It is therefore my interest that I should be at peace with them; and this it will be very easy for me to be. As trade is their only object; as they do not endeavour to make useless conquests, and that, contented with preserving their dominions, and consequently having no desire to enlarge them, they will always endeavour to live in peace with me, provided I do not make any attempts that may raise their fears, or endeavour to encroach upon their rights."

In this manner, dear Brito, a monarch, who is well skilled in the opinions, the maxims, and interests of foreign nations, draws such consequences from them, as may heighten the glory and felicity of his people. A minister of state is as much obliged to excel in this science as a prince, and for the same reasons. It ought likewise to be the study of a general. For how would it be possible for him to take certain measures, which are sometimes so necessary to give success to a military project, if he is not acquainted with the genius of the people against whom he is to fight. I will suppose that marshal Villars, having not long before commanded an army of twenty thousand men, in Flanders, against the duke of Marlbo

\* The Dutch.

rough, who had headed the like number of Englishmen, should set out for the frontiers of Portugal, to command twelve thousand French, who were to fight thirty thousand Portuguese. If he were entirely unacquainted with the nation, and were to judge of them from the idea he had formed to himself of the English, his first care would doubtless be, to look out for some strong and advantageous spot, in order to encamp his forces. He would surround it with strong lines; and make use of all the art possible, to compensate for his want of men. "I met," would he say, "with formidable enemies in Flanders, against whom, though I fought with equal numbers, I was obliged to exert the utmost efforts of prudence and caution. How much ought I to be upon my guard on this occasion?" Dost thou imagine, dear Brito, that he would make the like reflections, was he well acquainted with the Portuguese? Methinks, on the contrary, he would say, "Courage, my brave Frenchmen! Let us march out of these unnecessary lines. Had we but half these numbers, our enemies would not dare to face us. That nation is more used to handle a rosary than a gun. At this instant, whilst we are reflecting on the honour we are going to achieve, they are thinking only of recommending themselves to the prayers of their priests. Our whole thoughts are employed in considering how we may best keep our ranks close, and march in good order, whilst they are singing anthems in honour of St. Anthony of Padua. You are going to engage, my brave fellows, a parcel of monks in a military dress." I do not doubt, good friend Brito, but that a speedy victory would attend upon such a speech, which would have been formed from the knowledge he had of the genius and manners of the people he was marching against.

If those personages who command armies, or pre-  
side at the helm, are obliged whenever they are desirous of making any considerable achievement, to be acquainted with the genius of various nations, such historians as endeavour to immortalize the actions

of heroes ought to excel in that science. How would it be possible for them to unravel the intrigues of a court; the motions, the steps, in a word, the several actions of different nations; if they are ignorant of the causes which set the springs a going? What a pitiful history would that author write, who should attempt to exhibit the transactions, in France, under Henry III. and Henry IV. without being acquainted with the genius and manners of the Spaniards? Tacitus, Salust, Livy, and such like historians, would not have given us such perfect pieces, had they not been thorough masters of the several subjects they wrote about. They had made it their study to get a perfect knowledge of the genius of the persons and nations, whose actions they described. Julius Cæsar was a complete master of the customs, dispositions and manners of the Gauls, as is evident from his commentaries; indeed this knowledge was equally useful to him as a general, an historian, and as a private man.

Farewel, worthy Brito; reap all the advantages possible by thy travels. May thy life be contented and happy, and the God of thy fathers indulge thee with the greatest prosperity.

### L E T T E R CLXXXV.

The frailty and inconstancy of the favour of princes to their ministers or advisers, illustrated by some historical facts.—Reflections on the folly of a passionate fondness for courts.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

London.—

**I** Was speaking, dear Isaac, to one of my friends concerning the calamities in which several great men have been involved, though the favour they were indulged with by their sovereigns seemed to have promised them the most undisturbed felicity. To these reflections I added some others; and I observed to my friend in question, that most heroes, who have

felt the severest rigours of fortune, after having been raised to the most exalted heights, had signalized themselves by the most important services done their monarchs.

Without searching into the most remote antiquity for instances of this truth, I shall go no farther back than the sixth century. I therein find, excellent Isaac, that Justinian owed his glory and grandeur to Belisarius. This general re-united, to the empire, Africa, which had been severed from it above an hundred years; overturned the monarchy of the Vandals; beat the Persians several times; conquered Italy; and, lastly, preferred the duty and fidelity he owed his sovereign to the advantage of being declared king of the Goths, in the room of Vitiges, whom he had taken prisoner. But what a reward did he meet with for all these atchievements? They could not secure poor Belisarius from the most cruel fate. He was falsely charged with having engaged in a conspiracy against Justinian; and this prince, forgetting all the services he had received from that great man, divested him of all his possessions, and removed him from his several employments; and after having been so cruel as to order his eyes to be put out, caused him to be imprisoned in a tower, which still goes by this hero's name, and is built on the sea-shore, between the castle of the seven towers, and the great seraglio. Thou thyself hadst a sight of this prison, before thy departure from Constantinople.

Some authors have writ that Belisarius, being afterwards set at liberty, was reduced to so very indigent a state, that, to prevent his being starved, he was forced to beg about the streets. However, this incident does not agree with an ancient tradition, which prevailed during a long series of years in Greece, and which is current even at this day. Thou hast heard many of the inhabitants of Constantinople declare, that Belisarius died in the tower where he was confined; and that, holding a little bag from his window, as is usual for prisoners to do, he cried aloud to the passengers, "A half-penny for poor Belisarius,"



“*Belisarius, the loss of whose eye-sight was owing to “Envy, not to Guilt.”* This Greek tradition is confirmed by some authors; and here follows the expression in Latin, employed by one of them, as it occurs at present to my memory: “*Date eleemosynam Belisario, què m fortuna, non virtus, dereliquit;*” That is, “Your charity to Belisarius, whom fortune, not virtue abandoned.” Without spending time, good Isaac, in enquiring which of these two opinions ought to be received, it is sufficient, in order to raise our surprize at the misfortunes which have befallen the greatest men, to consider Belisarius either begging about the streets of Constantinople, or imprisoned in the most cruel manner. Was not this a very strange sort of a recompence for the glorious services he had done his sovereign? And ought not the sad fate of this great general to stand as a monument, that nothing is so frail and inconstant as the favour of princes?

How great a field is opened for the reflections of philosophers, to see men sacrifice their ease, their rest, their lives, their possessions, and even sometimes their honour, for ungrateful sovereigns, who are so frantic as to imagine, that the happiness of serving them is reward sufficient for the most important services. If courtiers, to acquire virtue, would take but a fourth part of the pains they give themselves in order to obtain one glance from their sovereign, what a number of sages would be found in all courts? I am certain, excellent Isaac, that Socrates did not toil so much, to raise himself above human nature, as a courtier does, in order to gain the favour of his sovereign. To how many menaces must he submit before this? How many mortifications must he suffer? How many affronts must he put up? In short, how often is he under apprehensions of losing, in an instant, the fruit of all his labours? How many people have suffered in the most groveling manner, during their whole lives, without having had the felicity of obtaining so much as a single look; and who, after passing three fourths of the day in an antichamber,

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have spent their expiring moments in regretting the ill use they had made of their time? In this manner their lives have been one continued scene of hurry; and they have been for ever tortured, either by the stings of authority, or by those of repentance.

Of all follies, dear Isaac, a passionate fondness for courts seems, to me, the most incurable. We seldom see courtiers prudent enough to own their errors, even though they have time to profit by that knowledge. Their wishes to rise to grandeur never leave them, till they have lost all hopes of obtaining them.

A circumstance which seems to me very surprizing is, that the frequent disgrace of favourites should not serve as a memento to those who thirst so eagerly after the like honours. Is it not surprizing, that the fatal catastrophes of most of those whose rank is envied, should not lessen the number of their rivals? We meet, in all ages, with as remarkable incidents concerning the reverses of fortune, as that which befel Belisarius. The disgrace of Admiral de Bonivet; the tragical end of the duke and cardinal of Guise; those of the earl of Essex, of the marshals Biron and d'Ancre, Fouquet's imprisonment, and that of le Blanc, the banishment of Ripperda and Chauvelin; in a word, the sad fate of so many other countries, who fell victims to their ambition, would, one should naturally imagine, considerably lessen the number of court-idolaters?

I am sensible, excellent Isaac, that some of the favourites and ministers above-mentioned, owed their misfortunes to their ill conduct, rather than to the ill-usage of fortune. It may be affirmed, that marshal Biron would have been always happy, had he never forfeited the allegiance he owed his prince; and that the duke of Guise and the earl of Essex reduced their sovereigns to the necessity of punishing them. But though I owned that these favourites were really guilty, I yet may be allowed to assert, that they had done their country and their sovereign, such signal services, that they seem to have merited some indulgence. However, I would except the duke of Guise,  
it

it being absolutely necessary that he should die, in order to preserve the life of Henry III. With respect to marshal Biron and the earl of Essex, had their sovereigns been capable of entertaining as warm sentiments of friendship and gratitude, as private persons, I do not doubt but that the former would have been pardoned by Henry IV. and the latter by queen Elizabeth. Both had done such signal services, that methinks their lives ought to have been spared, and their punishment ought to have been only banishment or a prison. But princes never pardon; or if they ever do, it is on such hard conditions as is equivalent to hatred.

The clemency of queen Elizabeth to the earl of Essex is very much applauded: But what was this clemency? To merit it, a hero must have been obliged to demean himself; to own himself guilty at the same time that he, perhaps, was innocent; and to beg, in the most ignominious manner, for the continuance of a life which he would have dishonoured. Had queen Elizabeth been capable of entertaining a true friendship, in this case, being satisfied with his justification (since the majesty of the throne could not claim any more) she would not have insisted upon his making a confession which she knew to be extremely severe. But she thought as a queen; and was entirely unsusceptible of those tender returns, those easy and gentle reconciliations with which friendship inspires the bosoms of persons in a lower station. Her heart was susceptible only of some emotions of pity; and those were stifled by pride, vanity and presumption, passions ever inseparable from a throne.

Henry IV. had much greater reason to consent to sign the warrant for marshal Biron's execution, than queen Elizabeth to consent to that of the earl of Essex. If ever any monarch in the world possessed the qualities that form the true friend, it was that illustrious king. Nevertheless, if we examine this matter strictly, we must be obliged to own, that considering the great services which marshal Biron had done

him

him, the punishment would have been severe enough, had he been imprisoned for life, in the Bastile; so far ought he to have been from sentencing, to a scaffold, a general and friend, to whom he partly owed his mighty achievements.

It is incomprehensible to me, worthy Isaac, how a man, how exasperated soever he may be against another, can yet prevail upon himself to deliver him up to an executioner, after having lived in the most friendly manner with him during his whole life; after having given him numberless assurances of the most sincere friendship, and opened to him the most sacred recesses of his heart. Would not one imagine, that he should feel the most tender emotions, even when his anger was at its highest pitch? Among private men, the ties formed by friendship are as strong as those made by blood. I figure to myself, dear Isaac, that had'st thou offended me in the most cruel manner, and it was in my power to sentence thee to die, I should first speak thus to myself; "Is it possible for thee to take away the life of a man for whom thou once hadst so sincere an affection? Isaac Onis, indeed, has offended thee; and dashed, in an instant, all the good actions he ever did in thy favour; but still it is the same Isaac Onis, who once did thee such important services. To him thou wholly owest part of the knowledge thou hast acquired. It is he with whom thou used to discourse with so much pleasure; whose conversation was so delightful to thee, and whose letters gave thee so much joy. Will it be possible for thee ever to forget this? Wilt thou be swayed by the impulses of thy anger? Wilt thou give orders for putting to death, a man, whose life was always dear to thee? Surely no: It will be impossible for thee ever to consent that Isaac should be put to death. In case he did offend thee, remember that he once was as kind as man could possibly be. Generosity, the duties of friendship, and those which I owe myself, all call upon me to pardon his late errors. Let him live; let him own, if this be possible,  
how



how unworthy he is of a friend like me. However, I ought so to order matters, as not to give him a farther opportunity of doing me any more prejudice. I cannot say whether he will ever be my friend again, and acknowledge sincerely his error. Till I shall have the most convincing proofs of this, I will order him to go to a distance from me, and fly the places where I inhabit." In this manner, good Isaac, might friendship and gratitude oblige all to act, who are guided by the impulses which those virtuous passions inspire. But they do not produce as kind effects in the breasts of princes. The tenderness of their disposition is not so great, as to make them obliterate an offence merely to taste the pleasure and satisfaction of pardoning it.

Those, who are desirous of seeking for true friendship, ought to go at a great distance from courts. Let us leave to mistaken courtiers the folly of building their hopes on the calmness of the most tempestuous sea. Let us laugh friend Isaac, at their idle projects, their fears, their desires, their torments, and bewail the unhappy, and often fatal end, of so many fruitless cares. Nothing can afford so pleasing an amusement to a philosopher, as to reflect on the tumultuous life of courtiers; but nothing can affect so strongly a thinking man, as to see how far human nature is degraded, by those who idolize fortune.

Was it left to my option, excellent Isaac, to live in the most lonely forests, or to pass my days in royal palaces, I should chuse the brute creation for my companions rather than courtiers. I should be permitted, at least, to live in deserts without constraint. I should not fear that a bear, to usurp the command of my cottage, would accuse me to a lion, of disrespect. A stag, after having browsed in my garden, and lived upon my possessions, would not be so base as to censure my conduct; find fault with every step I had taken; and diffuse a deadly venom over my most innocent actions. How common is it for courtiers to blacken those, at whose houses they daily dine, the instant

they are come from them; and that in the view of pleasing some other persons whom they slander the very first opportunity they have for so doing? Calumny is the same to courts as extent is to matter; it forms the essence of it. A courtier implies a person who is ever prepared to inveigh against those who want to get into the good graces of the prince. His praises are so many affronts; and if he happens to praise any person, such praise never fails to be a satire on some body else.

The greatest advantage, excellent Isaac, I should reap, in preferring forests to courts, would be, my not being obliged to blush, every instant, at my being forced to approve of such follies, unjust actions, and cruelties, as I could not forbear condemning in my own mind. What man if he has ever so little regard for truth, can submit to such meannesses. Nevertheless, these are the engines by which courtiers compass all their ends. It is by dint of meditation and study, that a philosopher acquires learning and wisdom: But a person, who devotes himself to a court, has no other way of rising to greatness, than by dissimulation, flattery, falsehood, perfidy and treachery. But what qualities, what employments are these for persons who have yet some ideas of reason and equity left in them? What cruel pangs of remorse must they feel!

Enjoy thy health, friend Isaac; live contented and happy; and always suppress in thee a desire of living in courts.

## LETTER CLXXXVI.

The Question whether the bodies of angels are spiritual or material, discussed.—Quotations from several authors on the subject.—The ridiculous system of Incubus and Succubus's exposed.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA,

Grand-Cairo—

**T**HE doctors and philosophers, excellent Monceca, among the Jews and Nazarenes, as well as the Mahommedans, are greatly divided in opinion whether angels have bodies. A great number of rabbis imagine they have bodies composed of a subtle fire; and they confirm their assertion from a passage of the royal Psalmist, who, speaking of the angels, says, that "the servants of God are a burning fire\*." Some other learned Israelites, among whom Philo holds a distinguished rank, maintain, "The angels are incorporeal spirits, who do not partake like mankind, of a nature half rational, and half irrational; and that they are intelligences and forms abstracted from all matter, and resembling unity †." The Nazarene divines differ as much as the Jews. Origen (a), St. Ambrose (b), Basil (c), Justin (d), Pfellus (e), Lactantius (f), &c. declare that angels are composed of a substance extremely fluid and light. St. Austin, that exalted genius, revered not only by the Nazarenes, but also by the philosophers, seems very much inclined to favour that opinion. "I dare not determine," says that learned man, whether spirits are invested with a body formed of subtle matter (g). He favours this opinion still more in another place. "The devils, says he, have bodies of

\* Psalm CIII.

† Philo Jud de Mundo, pag. 101.

(a) Origen, *Libr. de Princ.* (b) Ambros. *de Arca Noe*, cap. I. (c) Basil *de Spir. Sancto*, cap. XVI. (d) Justin. *Mart. in Apol.* (e) Pfellus *de Dæmon*, pag. 173. (f) Lactant. *de Divin. Inst.* lib. II. (g) August. *de Civit. Dei*, lib. XI, cap. XXIII.

dense, gross, and moist air, as some learned men have asserted. Some famous authors pretend, that angels are beings merely spiritual. Dionysius the Areopagite, Athanasius (h), St. Chrysostom (i), Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas (k), and almost all the Nazarene divines who wrote in this age, declare in favour of this opinion.

The Mahomedans are not better agreed, on this subject, than the Jews and Nazarenes. Several of their muftis call in the authority of the Koran, to prove the materiality of the bodies of angels. They instance the spot which the angel Raphael made in the moon, by touching it with one of his wings: But some few doctors explain this passage after an allegorical manner, and will not have it explained in the ordinary sense. Amurath Ben Choucala, in the commentary on the Sonna (l), says, "that the angels having been created by a divine blast, as were the souls of men, there cannot be any thing material in them, as there is nothing so in the essence of the souls of men."

Some Nazarene writers would have introduced a medium, to which might have been referred those various opinions about which divines of different communions are divided. Gregory (m) and Joan. Damascenus (n) write, that angels seem corporeal with respect to God, and incorporeal in comparison of mankind. But this opinion is ridiculous; for there cannot be any dissimilitude between one spirit and another; as it cannot be, that a material thing, how delicate soever its contexture may be, can ever be looked upon as spiritual, and be without extension. And in-

(h) Athan. de comm. essent. patris, filii & spiritus sancti. (i) Chrysost. Homil. II. in Genes. (k) Thom. Aquin. summæ I. II. Dist. XII.

(l) This is a book which contains Mahomedan traditions, which they have in the greatest reverence.

(m) Gregor. Magnus, Moral. libr. II. pag. 203.

(n) Joann. Damascen. libr. II. pag. 189.



deed the system of those well meaning doctors has not been much followed; and it does not appear that many people have taken the pains to refute or defend it: And therefore I will content myself with examining the reasons of the two preceding opinions, according to one of which, angels are corporeal, and according to the other, spiritual.

Those, who declare celestial intelligences to be invested with material bodies, suppose a difference between good and bad angels. They say, that the latter, before their fall, had bodies composed of simple, impassible air, which, since their committing sin, is grown more gross and condensed, by the contagious proximity of terrestrial things; by which means it is become gross, dense, and capable of being tortured by fire, which, before, could not act upon it, because of its extreme thinness. By this system, they easily explain in what manner the flames of a material fire are able to make an impression on celestial beings, which had been created impassible. But these doctors fall into an insuperable difficulty; since in case it was necessary, in order for fire to act on the bad angels, that the subtle matter, which composed their bodies should become more dense by reason of the vapours of the earth, how would it be possible for the soul of man, being solely spiritual, to be affected by this material fire? In order for this, it must necessarily be made, (in the same manner as the bodies of angels) either of a thin air, which may become more dense by means of the vapours of the earth, or else it must be formed of a terrestrial substance. But, in both these suppositions, man's soul will necessarily be found material, which opinion is exploded in general, not only by all the Nazarenes, but even by a great number of philosophers of different religions.

Most divines who asserted the materiality of angels, scarcely believed that the soul of man was of a spiritual nature. For if the soul is able to exist, can taste joy, pleasure, pain, good and evil, without the assistance of matter, what occasion is there

to ascribe bodies to angels? To this it may perhaps be answered, that as God bestowed bodies upon all his creatures, he therefore did not think proper to deprive the angels of them: But this is a very weak argument. The reason why the Deity indulged every creature a material body, was, because all of them, the angels excepted, were to live and exist in matter. Now it was necessary for them all to be invested with the matter in question. But angels have no other residence than that of the Deity; they surround his throne, and are perpetual spectators of his glory, greatness, power, and immensity. They stand in no need of substance, and taste no pleasure but in the contemplation of the wonders of their creator. Of what use, therefore, can a material body be to them? Of none: And the soul alone performs all its functions. As God never does any thing in vain, is it not plain, that he did not give material bodies to celestial substances, since they were not to make any use of them?

These, good Monceca, are very good arguments against such as do not suppose the bodies of angels to be entirely spiritual. However they defend their opinions by objections which are of very great weight. "You argue, say they, for the immateriality of angels, from that of the soul of man. We deny its being spiritual, and believe that nothing is absolutely immaterial but God. Why do you think it impossible for God to grant, to a certain number of thin, material particles, the faculty of thinking, and of thinking to endless ages? Before you prove the necessity of angels being spiritual, prove that of the soul. Shew us that God could not cause matter to be endued with a moving faculty, and with knowledge. Till this be proved, we must justly say, not only that angels are not invested with bodies, but even that their souls are not material.

Thou knowest, excellent Monceca, how knotty this question is, whether it was possible for God to unite matter with thought. The greatest philosophers have been very much divided about this opi-

nion. A great number of rabbis believe the soul to be immortal, and at the same time, material. The Nazarene divines, in this age, reject unanimously this opinion; but it was formerly strongly asserted\*, by some famous writers and divines among them. It is, therefore, not so easy, as may be imagined at first sight, to prove the uselessness of the material body of angels; since it must be first shewn, in the most demonstrable manner, that there are other beings, beside God, who are spiritual, and which cannot be material, even though the Deity should interpose its power. For all reasonable philosophers are agreed, that the soul can be immaterial if God will have it such; since no greater power is required, in a spiritual being, to create another spiritual being, than to form a material one out of nothing; and, after having formed it, to endue it with sensation and perception; but those assert, that God, if he pleases, can endue matter with understanding; and that no greater power is required to give a material being thought, than to make a spiritual substance act on a material one. Therefore, before a person should attempt to prove, that it would be absolutely impossible for angels to have bodies, and even material souls, he must demonstrate clearly what are the causes which confine his power.

It is not under philosophical reasonings only, that those who assert the materiality of celestial intelligences shelter themselves; the Jewish and Nazarene doctors who adhere to that opinion have wherewithal to authorize it in their sacred books. The rabbis, to confirm their opinion, instance several corporeal apparitions of angels, as those with whom Abraham, Lot, and Tobit were favoured; and they cite the example of Jacob, with whom an angel wrestled a whole night. Besides their authorities, which are common both to Jews and Nazarenes, the latter have several others, borrowed from the books which are

\* Animam nihil esse, si corpus non sit. Tertul. de *[Anim]*  
cap. VII.

wholly peculiar to them. But I fancy these are less demonstrative than they imagine; because their opponents deny that the bodies with which those angels were invested at the time of their appearance, were the true bodies of the celestial appearances. They say that they had borrowed them, to fulfil the orders of the Deity. There is a very strong reason to favour this opinion. If angels were always invested with a body equally strong, dense, and as weighty as that of men, how would it be possible for them to vanish away in an instant? In proportion as they should rise into the middle region of the air, they ought to vanish insensibly from the eyes of those who had seen them, unless they shrouded themselves in a cloud, in which case there would still remain several difficulties. But if we suppose they were invested only with a body of collected air, it was easy for them to expand, in an instant, that fluid matter.

If I might be allowed, excellent Monceca, to give my thoughts in an affair of so difficult and abstruse a nature, I would own to thee, it is my opinion, that celestial intelligences purely spiritual never assumed a real body. The example of David does not invalidate my opinion; for, in like manner as the soul, which is but a pure spirit, acts on the body by the power of God, in like manner a spiritual angel might have acted during a whole night on Jacob's body. With respect to the material substance which appeared to the eyes of that patriarch, it existed only in his imagination by the power of the Deity, who, in the general order established by him, not having thought proper that the soul should have any clear and precise idea of a spirit, so long as it is confined in the body, represents it to him always under the image of a creature of which it has a distinct idea.

In rejecting, dear Aaron, the material vehicles which some affirm that angels have frequently assumed, we entirely ruin a great number of monstrous chimeras, consecrated under the name of religion, not only by the Jews, but even by the Christians. We entirely destroy the ridiculous system of Incubus's  
and



and Succubus's, the existence of which has been asserted by so many different writers. We prove evidently, that as devils are pure and simple spirits, it is impossible they should beget material creatures, or engage in a criminal correspondence with men and women: And we shew the falsity of all the fictions which have been writ concerning fauns, sylvans, satyrs, nymphs, lamiae, lemeres, manes, larvæ and penates, which are pretended to have been demons who assumed the different bodies of those false Deities.

The instant a person denies totally the possibility of the union of matter with the spiritual essence of angels, there remains, in order to excuse the silly, chimerical tales of men begotten by devils, but one single objection, equally false and impious; but it is so ridiculous and absurd, that it would be trifling to say any thing more about it. I therefore shall content myself with only observing, that as God did not allow the devil the power of over-turning, in this manner, the most constant laws of nature, he has, by that very means, prevented the horrid disorders that would have ensued from thence. And indeed, what confusion would there be in the universe, if devils could be able, daily, to get three or four thousand girls, in Europe, with child? If the ridiculous opinion which allows them such a power was once to be approved by the most learned men, prostitutes would be over-joyed to have always have some excuse ready at hand, to extenuate their lewd conduct; and thus the several children of Cupid would be deemed the offspring of the devil.

I shall end my letter, excellent Monceca, with a passage I met with in the author of Count de Gabalis, who refutes, in a humorous though at the same time, solid manner, this ridiculous opinion. "Our divines," says I to him\*, "are far from asserting, that the devil is the father of all those children who have a clandestine birth. They acknowledge that the devil is a spirit, and therefore cannot procreate. Gre-

\* Count de Gabalis, conclusion on the IV. conversation.

gory of Nyssa," replied the Count, "does not say so; he declaring that devils multiply among one another, in the same manner as mankind. I am not of his opinion," replied I, "but it so happens, say our divines, that—Don't tell us (interrupted the Count) don't tell us what they say; for then you would tell us a very filthy thing. How abominable an evasion have they found there! It is surprizing that they should all have declared in favour of this filthy opinion; and delight in posting, insnaringly, hobgoblins, to take advantage of the idle bestiality of anchorites; and to give birth, on a sudden, to miraculous men, whose illustrious memory they blacken by so shameful an origin. Do they call this philosophising? Is it worthy the Divine Being to say, that he has so much complaisance for the devils, as to favour these abominable practices; to indulge them the gift of procreation, which he has refused to great saints; and to reward these obscenities, by creating, for these embryos of iniquity, souls more heroic than for those which were formed in the chastity of a lawful marriage? Is it worthy of religion to say, as your divines do, that the devil is able, by this detestable artifice, to impregnate a virgin during sleep, without sullying her virginity? This is as absurd as the story, which Thomas Aquinas relates in his sixth Quodlibet, of a girl lying with her father, whom he supposes to have met with the like adventure, as some heretical rabbis declared to have befallen the daughter of Jeremiah, whom they declare to have conceived the famed cabalist Ben Syrach, by her going into the bath after the prophet.—If I might presume to interrupt you, (says I to him) I would confess, to appease you, that it were to be wished that our divines had hit upon some solution which might have been less offensive to chaste ears; or had strongly denied the incidents on which this question is grounded."

I shall not add, dear Monceca, to this passage. It shews perfectly well the absurdity of the pretended copulation of Incubus's and Succubus's with human creatures; and plainly evinces how requisite it is,  
both

both for the sake of modesty and religion, absolutely to deny the possibility of it.

Enjoy thy health, dear Monceca ; may thy life be undisturbed with misfortunes ; and may the God of thy fathers favour thee with an uninterrupted series of prosperity.

### LETTER CLXXXVII.

Critical observations on historians and other writers.

—A number of bad historians have appeared in England.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS

London.—

**T**HE English, excellent Isaac, inveigh very justly against the vast number of foreign authors, who take upon them to write the history of England, and are so impertinent as to give their opinions concerning the laws and customs of that kingdom. A friend of mine, a whig, spoke to me the other day, with great indignation, concerning those wretched compilers, who presume to write the history of a nation with which they are utterly unacquainted ; and who, scribbling only in the sordid view of getting money, dishonour the majesty of history, and at the same time, the glory of those great men, whom they undertake to speak of. “ Observe,” said he to me, “ how shamefully king William, king George I. the duke of Marlborough, and several other illustrious personages, are degraded in the wretched continuation of Rapin Thoyras. Can any thing be more horrid, or more apt to shock good men, than to see the greatest heroes exposed to the venal pen of a spendthrift, needy vagabond, and of some vagrant, dissolute priests, who would have been starved in their native country ; and who endeavour to get a subsistence in another kingdom, by the impertinent rhapsodies they print in them ? If all their readers were well enough skilled in the affairs of Europe, to perceive the ridicule and absurdity of those

pitiful,

pitiful performances, the English would be less exasperated against such contemptible libels, which they have the insolence to call histories. But how many men in France, Germany, Italy, &c. form a judgment of the merit of English heroes, only by the lying compositions of those insolent rhapsodists? For, how contemptible soever they be, there nevertheless are persons so weak, or so prepossessed, as to adopt their writings as accurate and judicious. Should a superstitious Italian be asked, what idea he had formed to himself of king William III. I am certain that he will chuse to take it from the different pictures which the continuators of Rapin have given of him, how odious soever they may be, rather than from what Rapin himself, and several other wise and disinterested historians say of that prince.

The circumstance, which is most odious with respect to those libels, is, that they are not only printed by our best and most faithful allies, but even authorized by privileges or licences from them; and that this seeming approbation raises very highly the opinion of them in the minds of foreigners, who do not know that these licences are granted only with respect to the impression, and no ways with regard to the subject or matter of the book. We know very well, that the liberty of the press ought not to be invaded in any manner, and we are the most zealous to protect it. But we do not think that the excess of it ought to be tolerated in this manner; and are of opinion, that the government shews too great lenity on that occasion. Indeed its lenity is daily abused: witness the writings relating to count de Bonneval with the marquis de Prie, which, tho' expressly forbid by the states of Holland, were yet lately reprinted at the Hague under the fallacious title of Count de Bonneval's Memoirs, by the favour of a head and tail, newly added to serve them as a passport. Thus the most trifling pieces are vended every where with impunity.

Persons of learning and good sense commonly censure, with vigour and contempt, the idle and flat sequels



quels of Don Quixot, and, the comical romance, &c. But would it not be a more laudable task for them to point out the evils which these monstrous and satirical histories occasion; and revenge, in this manner, the memory of a great number of heroes, who deserve apologists infinitely more than Cervantes and Scarron? I am highly exasperated against the literati of France, when I reflect that they will undertake a task, in favour of the author of a romance, which they refuse to do for a famous general and an illustrious monarch. If any person should take it into his head to print, in Paris, a work in which the works of Homer or Virgil should be attacked, immediately thirty zealous writers would rise up against him, to vindicate the reputation of those renowned poets: but there are daily sold publicly, in that city, fifty trifling and impertinent pieces, in which all the great men of these latter ages are treated with the utmost insolence; and yet no person makes the least complaint about it. So far from it, many purchase and read the books in question; and even some are so wrong-headed as to approve of them, grounding their judgment on the silence of good writers. If the books in question, say these persons, were so trifling as you pretend them to be, they would have been severely censured before this time; but since nothing has yet been written against them, they doubtless are approved by persons of abilities, and consequently we have no reason to condemn them. "Such commonly is the way of reasoning of such as form a superficial judgment of things, and from the opinions of other people; a false and ill-grounded way of reasoning, which ought to be strongly refuted by the truly learned. When they neglect to do this, their conduct merits the greatest blame; since any person who permits false and dangerous opinions to spread, and that at a time when it was in his power to prevent it, neglects the public welfare; is a bad citizen; and forgets what he owes to himself and his fellow creatures.

I don't

I don't know, friend Isaac, what thou mayest think of the complaints made by this Englishman, but I myself could not forbear acquiescing with his opinion. As history is the sacred depositum of the actions of illustrious personages, it is an unpardonable crime to offer to violate it, by blending truth with falsehood; and no pretence can excuse so guilty an action. Though a writer should be an enemy to him whose history he writes, it is no less incumbent on him not to alter, in any manner, the incidents told by him. Great men are equally related to all nations; and are citizens of the world, because of the honour they do to human nature. A German has a right to be exasperated against a Frenchman who offers to despoil the duke of Marlborough of his glory; and a Spaniard against an Englishman who refuses marshal Villars the elogiums he deserves.

It were to be wished, for the advantage of history, as well as of those who study it, that such writers as devote themselves to it would consider themselves as members of the common-wealth of learning; that they would forget, in their assuming this character, their country; and that they would have no other idea, in writing, than that of instructing persons of worth, of immortalizing laudable actions, and of making guilt odious and contemptible. But few authors propose to themselves so noble and laudable an object, the greatest part of them being prompted to write from self-interested motives. One sells his pen to an avaricious bookseller, who will not allow him to introduce any particulars into a book, except such as may please a nation among whom he designs to vend it. Another writes to favour the hatred of a party, from whom he expects some recompence; and, for that reason, stuffs his books with nothing but the most satirical declamations. Hence we see that controversial works, in general, are fallacious and illusory accounts, rather than a plain and simple relation of certain incidents. No historian, who was a Jesuit, was ever able to do strict justice to the merit of several protestant heroes; and such among

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them as boast the greatest impartiality could not forbear blending their appauses with some odious restrictions. The Jansenist writers, not excepting the most renowned among them, could not prevail with themselves to applaud certain molinists, who merited the esteem of the whole world. To conclude, the Protestants have but too many authors among them, who are ever ready to censure, without the least examination, the conduct of all who profess the Romish religion.

Some writers, base flatterers of a prince whose subjects they are born, write romances, which they dedicate to him, as being the history of his glorious actions; and the proud sovereign seldom fails to swallow the bait which is held out to him. His vanity makes him imagine, that he is truly possessed of the virtues which are lavished so liberally upon him; and that he really achieved the several enterprises which are ascribed to him, though he was no ways concerned in them. He rewards cheerfully, and with the utmost munificence, these false encomiums which are bestowed upon him; and this extravagant generosity gives rise to an hundred historians, who take up their pens in no other view, but to take advantage of the vanity of a man who pays so largely for the falsities which are bestowed upon him.

It is no wonder, excellent Isaac, that the number of good historians, in these latter ages, should be so very scarce. Besides the singular qualities required in those who can be excellent, it is scarce possible that such should appear with impunity. Poor truth, which is in every body's mouth, and which all men pretend to seek, is cruelly persecuted. Whenever a writer is desirous of unfolding incidents, and transmitting them to posterity, in their genuine light, he never fails to make himself a great number of formidable enemies. If he is desirous of leading a calm undisturbed life, he must resolve to disguise certain incidents; and even then, it will be a very difficult task for him to please multitudes; every part exami-

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ning, with a critical eye, whether he inclines to their opponents. It sometimes happens, that by his flattering every one, he is generally hated. What a number of authors does this strike at, who are justly punished, not only for not daring to say what they knew, but even for saying the direct contrary?

The division of the various sects which prevail in Europe, is not the greatest obstacle which those historians meet with who would write with truth and impartiality. Such princes as imagine it is their duty to undertake the defence of their ancestors, and imagine that they themselves are insulted when the memory of their ancestors is attacked, are the most formidable scourges to historians. A Frenchman trembles the instant he writes upon a certain subjects. An ambiguous word, a too forcible expression, or a syllable misplaced, may cause him to be confined in the Bastile during the remainder of his days. An historian ought to set, in his study, the busts of Tacitus and Suetonius, to prompt him to discover, in imitation of those generous Romans, the most hidden springs of the politics employed in the reigns, the history of which he attempts to write: But instead of this, he adorns them with the plans of those castles where state-prisoners are confined, as a perpetual memento to him, not to take too great liberties with his pen. A German author is, in the present case, laid under the same restrictions as a Frenchman; the princes on the other side of the Rhine being as jealous of their authority as those on this side of it. In Italy, Portugal and Spain, the monarchs are not only to be dreaded, but likewise the inquisition. In England, where one would imagine that a writer runs no danger in speaking his thoughts, he yet runs great hazards, and seldom offends one of the parties with impunity. If a man does not bring himself in danger of losing his liberty or his life, for writing his thoughts he at least disturbs his repose, and makes a great number of enemies, who eagerly grasp at every opportunity they can meet with in order to molest, and, if possible, ruin him.



In Holland, hunger, thirst and want have the same effect on foreigners who set up for writers in that country, as fear on authors in other regions. On one hand, an apostate monk, who comes to Amsterdam or the Hague, to excite the charity of his new brethren, and obtain a florin a week more from the consistory he belongs to, writes an hundred falsities against the Papists, and blindly adopts the grossest falsities vented against them. Every thing suits his purpose, provided it will but swell his book, and give the world an opinion, that he bears a mortal hatred to the religion he abandoned. On the other hand, some Jesuit, or Molinist priest, after appearing in the United Provinces in a lay habit, and with a sword by his side, acts the part of a spy for the advantage of his brethren, and publishes the most inveterate pieces writ by them against the Protestants, or slanders them abominably in some wretched rhapsody of his own composing. He is paid for this purpose; and it would be impossible for him to subsist, did he not daily publish such falsities. A poor creature of a lacquey publishes, in Holland, *Memoirs of the Regency, during the Minority of Lewis XV.\**; and a trifling physician republishes them under the title of *The Life of the Duke of Orleans*, in order to assist a money-craving bookseller, in making the public purchase these falsities a second and third time. To expect therefore, dear Isaac, that an able historian should ever be found among such scribblers, is to imagine that the Messiah should arise in the Japanese nation. The one is as probable as the other. So far ought we then to be from flattering ourselves with the hopes that such a miracle should be wrought, we ought rather to fear, that the pernicious books of the scribblers in question will dishonour and totally destroy the majesty of history.

These pitiful writers seem to be lost to all sense of shame. As they are prompted to write merely from a venal spirit, there is nothing they will not scruple

\* See *Journal Litteraire*, Tom. XIII. page 451.

to advance, whenever they imagine it may be of some advantage to them. If they once get it into their heads, that it will be possible for them to obtain some slender pension from a monarch, they instantly take up the pen, applaud at random the most trifling particulars, and rashly condemn such as are most laudable. If this is not sufficient, after having vainly applauded the prince, they will be so mean as to flatter his officers and ministers; and if, unhappily for the commonwealth of learning, this groveling conduct will not raise them to the wished-for height, they will not scruple to dedicate their works to some clerk of the treasury, or valet-de-chambre. The impudent pride of some of these pitiful writers is still more shocking than their greedy thirst of gain, for some of them, entirely regardless of the contempt in which they are held by the public, are yet so bold as to censure the most illustrious writers. How insolently have twenty wretched scribblers spoke of Bayle, whose writings they had scarce capacity enough to understand.

Now I am speaking of such low writers as have endeavoured to blacken their memory, I will take notice of an impertinent circumstance I observed some time since in Moreri. Thou knowest that this priest, who had got a little tincture of history, compiled an historical work, of very little value, in an alphabetical order; and which some persons of learning and abilities have vainly endeavoured to correct and improve. Here follows the terms in which he speaks of the illustrious Thuanus, the wisest and most impartial historian France has to boast of. "Thuanus, say he \*, who favoured the Calvinists, &c." Can any thing be so shocking, as to see a great personage so odiously slandered? For, spite of Moreri's insinuations, it is universally known that Thuanus lived and died a Papist. It is plain from Moreri's expressions, that he endeavours to insinuate, that the sagacious historian in question was a protestant in

\* In the Article of Calvin.

his heart, and that the only reason for his writing certain things was, his having a tendency to the Protestant religion. How unhappy, excellent Isaac, is the fate of illustrious men and famous historians! Whenever they presume to speak the truth; a thousand horrid slanders are invented, to lessen the authority of the incidents related by them. Persons, who ought never to mention them but with the utmost veneration, dare to explain their intentions, and guess the motives which prompted them to act. What a confusion is there in the republic of letters? Shall Moreri presume to censure and calumniate Thuanus? O Tempora! O Mores! Ought we to wonder after this, that the whole school of the Jesuits should have exclaimed, and exclaim every day, against this great man; that Jurieu should have published an odious book against the renowned Arnauld; and that the last mentioned should have writ another still more criminal against the prince and princess of Orange, when they were raised to the British throne? It is the fate of great men to be attacked by pitiful writers. One would be apt to imagine, that this was a circumstance essential to their glory; and I do not think that any of them has escaped paying tribute to envy and malice.

Enjoy thy health, excellent Isaac; live contented and happy; and never suffer thyself to be over-reached by the fallacious power of slanderers.

## L E T T E R C L X X X V I I I .

Description of the city of Edinburgh.—A short account of the union of Scotland with England.—Some quotations from the Continuation of the History of England ; with remarks on them.—Character of the Scotch people.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

Edinburgh.—

**E** Dinburgh, excellent Brito, whither I have been arrived some days, is a spacious city, and pretty well built. Its destiny is like that of all capital cities, which is not the residence of the monarch ; instead of increasing, it is scarce possible for it not to fall from its former grandeur. The whole kingdom of Scotland feels the prejudice which its union with England has done it ; and the Scots frequently have cause to reflect, how different it is for a country to be governed by its own sovereigns, or reduced to the rank of a province. It cost the English infinite pains ; and almost endless toils, before they could entirely subject the Scots : For this nation, haughty, valiant, warlike, and jealous of its rights, submitted with regret to a foreign power ; and were ever ready to shake off a yoke, which they imagined the English intended to lay upon their necks.

Few revolutions have happened in England but the Scotch have had a share in them. They generally declared in favour of the party contrary to that which the English espoused ; or, if they did favour it, it was seldom with the consent of the whole nation. There always remained a considerable number of malecontents, who were ever ready to engage in any attempt against the government : And in this rank we may include the greatest part of those called Highlanders.

The Scotch are divided into two different sorts of people, who differ almost totally in their manners, customs, and even language. The gentlemen, and the



the inhabitants of the towns and low-lands, speak English. They are polite, and at the same time haughty. They are endued with genius, study the sciences, and are lovers of the polite arts. They perhaps are not possessed of all the virtues of the English, but then they have not their defects. The Highlanders speak a language called Gachlet, which is common to them with the Irish. Several of them wear yellow shirts, and lead a life very much resembling that of savages. They were formerly vastly prone to insurrections. Doubtless their dispositions are not changed ; but it is infinitely less easy for them to rebel. King William found means to build several fortresses in the midst of their mountains. Hewas the first monarch who subjected them ; and this was not one of the easiest enterprizes which that illustrious prince completed. These citadels, which the English have built in the mountains, did not strengthen their power so much in Scotland, as the union of the Scotch parliament with that of England. Thou perhaps may'st not be displeased, worthy Brito, to hear some of the chief circumstances of that union.

There were formerly, in this kingdom, estates general, like those who assemble in London, and who assumed the title of parliaments. The estates used to regulate the affairs of Scotland ; and had the same authority over their own country as the English have over theirs. The English, in queen Anne's reign, formed the design of uniting England with Scotland ; and, in that manner, to form of them one state, governed by one and the same parliament. It was no easy matter to put this project in execution, and yet they at last compassed their ends. They represented to the Scotch, that the union would be of advantage to the two kingdoms and that a certain and stated conjunction between them, by bands that should be eternal, would endue them with greater strength, to resist their common enemies ; and indeed it was natural enough to suppose, that the mutual interest both of England and Scotland required that union. Spite of the vigorous opposition made by a great number of able Scotchmen, who judged

in a different manner ; and by the aid of a great many more, who were won over, either by persuasion or interest, the English took a proper opportunity of times and seasons ; and, at last, solemnly united the Scotch parliament to that of England.

By this union, they allowed seats in the new parliament thus united, only to a very small number of Scotch members, whilst all those belonging to England were received into it, and preserved their seats as before. This considerable disparity with regard to the members of the English and Scotch, gives the former a certainty of having a plurality of voices, and so makes them absolute masters of all debates. And indeed, it was not till after having conquered a great many difficulties, that this union was entirely completed and settled. At first, several parties were formed among the Scotch. Some, upon pretence of their being inflamed with a true zeal for their country, would have the proposals of the English entirely rejected. Others consented to receive them, but required the number of the Scotch members to be unlimited ; and, that all those who had a right of sitting in the Scotch parliament should likewise have the privilege to sit in that of England. But the English made an artful use of all these divisions, and caused them to be subservient to obtain their ends ; and after several debates, and some slight contests, the union of the two kingdoms was resolved upon, and cemented for ever.

If the Scotch, worthy Brito, have suffered some little inconveniences by the loss of their privileges, they have gained, on the other hand, a great many advantages, which they never would have enjoyed, had they always formed a separate, and, as it were, a foreign nation from England. How many times would they have been exposed to the fury of civil wars, either foreign or domestic : To speak only of those in question, is not a division between two nations, subject to the same monarch, necessarily attended with the most fatal consequences ?

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The authors of the Continuation of the History of Rapin de Thoyras, have well enough described the different emotions which disturbed Scotland during this union. But then, as is usual with them, they abandon themselves to their enthusiastic spirit of controversy; and nothing can be more insolent and seditious than their reflections. "To procure that peace, and that increase of power," say they\*, "it was not necessary that Scotland should be in a worse condition than Ireland, which, notwithstanding its being conquered, has yet preserved its parliament. It was enough that this kingdom should bind itself by a solemn and irrevocable act, never to acknowledge any other king but him who should sway the English scepter. All that was added to this essential clause was over-shooting this mark, which the English ought only to have aimed at; and served to no other purpose than to degrade Scotland, and to make it, in proportion to the government, as dependent on England as Britany is on France. As so small a number of Scotch members, added to so great a number of those of England, were one day to compose the British parliament, where all things were to be decided by a plurality of voices, did not this give the English a certainty of succeeding in all their measures? Did not the following clause, repeated almost at every article, "Unless the parliament of Great Britain should think proper to make some alteration in it," give up all their rights, customs and privileges of the Scotch into the hands of the English? The odious restriction to sixteen Scotch peers who were allowed seats in the parliament of Great Britain, at the same time that no English peer was excluded from it; the subordination of the admiralty of Scotland to the lord high-admiral of England; the change in the weights and measures; the subjection as to the manner of levying taxes, and to the same kind of taxes; did these contribute to secure the peace and increase the

\* Rapin Thoyras's History of England continued from the accession of king George I. Tom. XII. pag. 106.

power ; or shew, in distinct characters, the superiority and sovereignty of England ? After all, it was but just that those, who had sold their king, should one day punish themselves, by selling their sovereignty and their independence. I protest that it is in no ill view I have laid down these several reflections, which belong to the province of an historian. I am even persuaded, and wish sincerely it were possible for me to persuade those who may imagine themselves aggrieved, that it is more advantageous for them that what is done should remain on its present foot, than to attempt to change it, even though they should be certain of success."

Is this, worthy Brito, writing with the dignity and impartiality required in history ? And could the author of a defamatory libel make use of other expressions ? Can any thing be more injurious to a nation than the following passage : " After all, it was but just that those, who had sold their king, should one day punish themselves, by selling their sovereignty and their independence !" It must be owned that the English government is very indulgent, or rather very much of a philosophic cast, to let such insolent assertions pass unpunished ! In Paris, the magistrates sentence daily to the flames, books whose only guilt is their containing some opinions that are a little too free ; or which describe, in lively touches, the consequences and effects of superstition. In London, the government will not condescend to take notice of a parcel of defamatory libels written against it ; and punish the authors of them no otherwise than by contempt and oblivion. But possibly such an indulgence is faulty, as it is an encouragement to slanderers.

Nothing can be so whimsical, and at the same time impertinent, as the protestation made by the writers in question, viz. " Of their having no ill view in making these reflections ; and their wishing sincerely that those, who imagine themselves aggrieved, may not attempt to recover their rights." It must be confessed that this is an excellent maxim, in order to incline the minds of people to the love of peace and

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tranquillity, to reproach them in so sharp and injurious a manner, with their submission to the laws. And is not this seditious exhortion to obedience perfectly well calculated to dispose them to it? To prove the disinterestedness and impartiality of these pretended historians, we need but read the following passage.

“ If ever a people had a right to take up arms, it was the Scotch on that occasion, when the affair was either for them to continue, or to cease to be, a particular people; that is, the business was, the losing their sovereignty, their rights, their honour, and their religion; a loss, to which the allegiance they owed their monarchs could not oblige them; much less that which they owed to a parliament, visibly and notoriously proved to have little zeal for their country; and conniving with those who endeavoured to raise themselves by demeaning and weakening it. Their right, their force, and the circumstances which made them still more formidable than they, in reality were, were known. They contented themselves with complaining; and with proving in due form, that their complaints were justly grounded. Those, who are accustomed to arbitrary power, may perhaps say, that the English, who are directed by other principles, cannot without condemning themselves, forbear owning, that this people did more than their duty, and that they would not have been so tractable in the like circumstances.”

Methinks, dear Brito, that a writer could not have declared more expressly, that the Scotch did wrong in not taking up arms against their sovereign; and that in pursuance of the maxims of the English, they ought still to take up arms. Could an Italian Jesuit, who had wrote in Rome the Continuation of Rapin's History of England, at the command of the pretender, have writ otherwise? How unhappy is it for such persons, as have not knowledge enough to distinguish a seditious libel from a true and candid history, to lose their time in reading such pieces as the libellous Continuation in question? That work must necessarily fill the minds of a great number of persons

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with false ideas ; when they blindly give credit to all the falsties contained in them ; and are seduced by the pitiful reflections of those wretched scriblers.

I have often spoke to thee, worthy Brito, as well as to Isaac Onis, of this Continuation of the History of England, because that every time I had recourse to it I found new errors in it. Some of these shew such extreme ignorance, that we can scarce believe the authors could have been guilty of them even after our reading them ; and to give thee a specimen of this, I shall only point out one passage in which these accurate geographers say, " that a ship cannot pass through the streights of Gibraltar, without being exposed to the cannon of that fortress." A person must be very ignorant, not to know the breadth of these streights ; and a great novice in gunnery, to fancy that a cannon-ball can reach from side to side of those streights. But the greatest defect in it, and that which renders it absolutely contemptible, is this notorious partiality : And the least reflection on this circumstance will shew, how dangerous it is to permit all persons indiscriminately to engage in writing history. This book will possibly not do much harm in England ; since, not to mention that most persons of a polite education know what is true in the incidents themselves, and that few of the common people understand French, Mr. Tindal, the English translator of Rapin, has not shewn so little judgment as to translate the rhapsody of his insipid compilers.

To return to the Scotch, friend Brito : Presbyrianism, that is, Nazarenism established much after the same manner as among the Genevans and Dutch, is the prevailing religion in Scotland. The worship of the church of England is established only in England and Ireland, and consequently there are no prelates in Scotland. Pastors, who are simply such, take care of the churches in the latter kingdom. In 1604. James I. forced the Scotch to receive the rites and ceremonies of the church of England : and even obliged them to admit of bishops, spite of

the opposition made by the presbyterian minister who abhor as much the English prelates, as the Jesuits do the prelates of the Gallican church, who have not admitted the constitution. This innovation brought afterwards great calamities on England, Scotland and Ireland. During these troubles and divisions, the presbyterian religion got the upper hand in Scotland; the prelates were turned out, and things reverted to their former situation, and have continued so ever since that time.

The literati among the Scotch are blended in the commonwealth of letters, with the English. They write in the same language, no distinction is made between an author who writes at Edinburgh, and another who writes to London. They are considered in the same light with two Frenchmen, one of whom should write at Paris, and the other in Lyons. Since the union of the two kingdoms, the Scotch have a right to share in the glory of Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke, and Dr. Clarke; in like manner as a native of Languedoc enjoys his share in the fame of Boileau, Mallebranche, and other renowned Parisians. They nevertheless have had several great men, who belong immediately to them; and besides the famous Dr. Gilbert Burnet, who, for his personal merit and his writings, and among others for his noble History of the Reformation of the Church of England, was raised to the episcopal see of Salisbury, and whom I lately mentioned to thee, speaking of his History of his own times\*; I shall content myself with hinting at the famous Buchanan, preceptor to James VI. king of Scotland, a remarkable politician, a great historian, and an excellent poet. In the last mentioned character, we, and the rest of the Christian societies, are obliged to him for having given us a beautiful translation, in Latin verse, of all David's psalms. This composition endears, in the highest degree, his memory to all persons of learning, the friars excepted who

\* See Letter CLX.

themselves

themselves painted but too strongly to the life in his other Latin poems, a circumstance which their violent persecutions did but too much authorize. His History of Scotland, writ in beautiful Latin prose, is an excellent work, with submission to the Jacobites, who cannot pardon the freedom with which he describes the gay life of the blessed Mary Stuart. And as to his Dialogue concerning the Right of Sovereignty in Scotland, it has displeased none but such as were born slaves to arbitrary power, and the fiery asserters of passive obedience.

Enjoy thy health, dear Brito; may thy life be contented and propitious. I shall return soon to Paris; and will not write to thee till I shall have got thither.

## LETTER CLXXXIX.

Judicial Astrology considered as a ridiculous system founded only on merely chimera.—Some thoughts concerning dreams, divine and natural.—Remarkable ones quoted from Scripture-Writings, and others; one particularly from Tully and another of Mahommed II.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

Grand-Cairo—

E G Y P T, worthy Monceca, has been in all ages, the center of superstition; and of all the heathens, none have carried the folly and extravagance of idolatry to such a height as the ancient Egyptians.

After the Nazarene religion had destroyed, in this country, the ignominious worship of idols, there remained many customs which were repugnant to reason. The religion in question could not eradicate the love the Egyptians had for judicial astrology, their blind belief in the chimerical predictions of the empiricks, and the dread of certain effects of nature,



ture, which the vulgar considered as so many prodigies. So far from it, this religion adopted these ridiculous and criminal superstitions; and they are now but too much in vogue among the Egyptians.

The religion of Mahommed, which succeeded that of the Nazarenes, has given fresh vigour to these errors. The Turks, who are naturally pretty superstitious, are very fond of soothsayers and soothsaying in particular; and there is no city in the world in which there are so many persons who pretend to foretel things to come, as in Grand-Cairo. Some pretend to discover the most hidden secrets by the help of the planets. Others, among whom there are unhappily but too many of our brethren, imagine they perceive, in the Cabala, the most infallible methods to discover the most hidden things. A great many others set up for interpreters of dreams; pretending to be as well versed in this vain idle science as the ancient Chaldeans. In short, many persons boast their possessing the deadly art of commanding over devils; and of being able, by their means, to foretel any thing they are desirous of knowing.

All these pretended prophets, good Monceca, are so many cheats and impostors, whose only aim is to deceive the public, by the help of certain words which they themselves do not understand; and of some odd wry faces, which make a strong impression on the minds of fools and madmen. A true philosopher, to shew evidently the falsity of their predictions, need but apply the following argument. As God has reserved to himself alone the knowledge of things to come; and as none but himself can know them: it is contrary to the essence of all creatures, of what species soever, to be able to discover futurity, without an immediate revelation of the Deity, which I prove thus. Every thing that must befall mankind depends on the liberty which God has indulged them, and he only is able to know the use they will make of it. If the use which they ought to make of it was writ in the stars, or known to the devil, a man would be determined, spite of himself, to follow the

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course of things as already settled. But I would ask, whether any man in the world is so very silly, as to assert that men, at the instant of their birth, are so strictly bound, and so necessarily determined to certain actions, that it is absolutely impossible for them to do any others? I fancy there is not found, even among the most rigid Jansenists, persons so strangely prejudiced, as to attempt to destroy so far the power of free-will. If we allow mankind but ever so little liberty, we destroy the pretended register of the planets, and the knowledge of demons; for it is sufficient that he has the power to determine himself, to give us a right of concluding, that God is the only being who knows what course he will take. I therefore reduce my argument, dear Monceca, and say thus; If the fate of man is writ in the planets, he consequently is not endued with any liberty, either physical or moral; he must act in consequence to what is written in those planets. A person must therefore be strangely blinded, not to perceive the uncertainty of the predictions vented by the astrologers. If the evident reasons, by which philosophers demonstrate the absurdity of it, have not been able to enlighten the minds of the common people; yet the falsity of them (new proofs of which are furnished daily) ought to have been of some service.

In declaring my opinion thus frankly, concerning judicial astrology and necromancy, I cannot prevail with myself to rank the interpreting of dreams in the same class. I will own, that most of those who set themselves up for interpreters of them, are a parcel of impostors, who ascribe this faculty to themselves: But I fancy there is often in our dreams, something supernatural, the cause of which is undiscoverable by us. Thou perhaps may'st wonder, dear Monceca, to hear me assert this opinion, which seems, at first sight, unworthy a philosopher. Pardon my weakness. I have exerted my utmost endeavours to overcome my prejudices; I perused the best authors, in order to meet with arguments to destroy my error; but all my care and study have served only to strength-

en me in my opinion. I will now inform thee of arguments which bias me on this occasion. Thou mayest give me thy thoughts on this head; and I shall be obliged to thee if thou wilt assist me in discovering whether they are deceitful, and have only the appearance of truth.

Authors both ancient and modern are agreed in the distinction they have made of dreams; and range them under two different classes, the first of which contains the divine dreams, and the second the natural. This division has been followed equally by the heathen philosophers, and by the Jewish as well as Nazarene doctors. They consequently must have believed, that there are some divine dreams which are sent us from heaven, since they ranked them under a particular class. This is the first circumstance favourable to nocturnal revelations; a circumstance that is so much the stronger, as it has been adopted by learned men of various nations, and professing religions directly opposite in their natures.

It may be said, that dreams have been considered, by all men, as supernatural. The Jews cannot doubt but that there are many of that kind. We are informed, by our sacred books, that God revealed in a dream, to Abimelech king of Gerar, that Sarah was Abraham's wife\*; and he foretold by the same means, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, the seven years of fertility, which were to be followed by seven years of barrenness†. That he informed Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, of the future state of empires, by the vision of a statue, the head of which was of gold, the arms and breast of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly iron and partly earth‡. God employed likewise a dream, to prevent Alexander from one day destroying Jerusalem. Josephus §, the historian of our nation, informs us, that the image of Jaddus appeared to this monarch, and promised him the

\* Gen. xx. 3 to 7.  
 † Gen. xl. 1 to 7.  
 ‡ Dan. ii.  
 7, & 31, --- 33.  
 § Joseph. Antiq. Judaic. Lib. XI. chap.  
 viii. pag. 554.

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conquest of the east. Alexander, sometime after this vision, being offended at the Jews, marched out against them with a design to chastise them severely: But Jaddus, cloathed in his pontifical vestments, coming out to meet him by the command which God had given him in a dream the night before; and the monarch, calling to mind that this priest was the same person who had appeared to him in Macedonia, in a dream, not only changed his resolution, but even sacrificed in the temple, after the Jewish manner, and granted them all the privileges they desired.

After such authentic testimonies of the truth of divine dreams, how can any person pretend to assert that heaven never reveals its will to men by revelations which he favours them with during their sleep. I know, dear Monceca, that such Jews and Nazarenes as reject celestial dreams say, that what God has done sometimes by extraordinary means, ought not to serve as the foundation of a general system; that it would be absurd to establish, that there is often something supernatural in rain, and in the sound of instruments, because God has sometimes sent extraordinary floods, and that the sound of trumpets overthrew the walls of Jericho; that these are particular miracles, which have no influence on the ordinary course of things; that when they happen, God will condescend to disorder, by supernatural means, the order established by him; and that this happens so seldom, that it is strange any person should make a rule of it, which may authorize a chimerical distinction; there being no proof to shew, that all the dreams, three or four excepted, which have been made since Adam, are owing to other means than that which produces the natural.

Some free-thinkers, several philosophers, who are not either of the Jewish or Nazarene belief, make much shorter work with this difficulty, by utterly denying the truth of the dreams mentioned in our divine books. Dreams, according to the persons in question, arise wholly from the distinct ima-  
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ges impressed on the imagination, or which are presented to it in the day-time. Every one has visions, according to his state and profession; and men are themselves the makers of them\*. A lover has dreams relating to his amours, a miser to his treasures, an ambitious man to his vain honours, and a warrior to battles, a counsellor to causes, an attorney to declarations, a farmer-general to theft and rapine, a Janseuist to enthusiasm and imposture, and a Jesuit to fraud and tyranny. It is the same with respect to women. The coquet fancies she imposes upon her lover, the inconstant that she is getting new admirers, the prude that she is delivering her tedious maxims, the devotee that she is dallying with her director, or slandering her neighbours; and the prostitute that she is revelling in pleasures, with which she was not able to satiate herself in the day-time. They quote the example of Theseus, who being desirous of imitating Hercules, always had this hero in the night-time present to his imagination. They mention Themistocles, who was so jealous of the trophies of Miltiades, that the thoughts of this tormented him even in his sleep. They do not omit Marcellus, who often used to dream, that he was fighting a duel with Hannibal.

But however, notwithstanding the natural dreams of these great men, yet this ought not to destroy the belief of such as have something supernatural in them. Because a thing happens, sometimes, in a certain manner, yet it cannot be inferred from thence, but it may also sometimes happen after a different manner. Thus, in taking it for granted that the dreams of Theseus, of Miltiades, and Marcellus, prove that great men have dreams which have nothing superna-

\* *Somnia, quæ ludunt mentes volutantibus umbris, &c.*

*Petron. Satyr. page 178.*

Thus translated.

Dreams, which delude the mind with sitting shades,  
Nor from the temples come, nor from the Gods,  
But each man forms his own; for when in sleep  
The limbs are all dissolv'd, the mind at rest,  
The actions of the day are wrought at night.

tural

tural in them, we still may be justly allowed to assert, that they also are indulged others, which, by the divine power, foretel them events to come. History has preserved a numberless multitude of incidents, related by the greatest writers, and sometimes by the most famous philosophers, which authorize the reality of celestial dreams. These wonderful dreams are not told us by persons of no genius or learning, by superstitious monks, or by authors of romances; but by persons whose genius and learning are acknowledged by all the literati.

Josephus informs us, that Archelaus, governor of Judea, thought he saw, in sleep a few oxen, eating some ears of wheat; and that an Essenian Jew who interpreted this dream, foretold this prince the calamities in which he was afterwards involved\*.

It is related, by Herodotus, that the daughter of Policrates, tyrant of Samos, having dreamed that she saw her father raised aloft in the air, where Jupiter watered him, and the sun anointed him, the deadly consequences proved but too evidently the truth of this dream; Orestes, lieutenant of Cambyfes, having given orders some time after, that Policrates should be hanged on the summit of a mountain, where Jupiter watered and washed with rain the body of that tyrant, and the sun anointed him with his own fat†.

Plutarch, who mentions several nocturnal revelations, relates, that the friends of Ptolomy, surnamed the Thunderer, dreamt, that Seleucus caused him to be tried before wolves and vultures; and that, after these blood-thirsty judges had past sentence, he distributed a great quantity of meat to his enemies. This omen was soon followed by his death, and by the entire defeat of his army‡.

Tully, that supreme genius, whose works have been the admiration of the learned during so many centu-

\* Joseph. Antiquit. Judaic. Libr. XVII. Cap. xv.

† Herodot. Histor. Libr. III. page 180.

‡ Plut. in Opt. Quare Deus Malef. Pœnam diff. page 510.

rics,

ries, relates so surprizing a story, that no person can read it but must be persuaded that there often is something in dreams, which declare the divine will, and the things that must befall us. "Two Arcadians," says that illustrious Roman, "who were friends, being arrived in Megara, were obliged to leave one another. One of them went and lodged at an inn, and the other with a friend of his acquaintance, at whose house he used always to reside. The person who lodged with his friend, saw, in a dream in the night, his companion, who conjured him to come to his assistance, to save him from the master of the inn, who was going to murder him. This sad vision having awaked him, he started up in a fright, flew out of the house, and made the best of his way to the inn. However, after he had gone a considerable way down the street, he thought it would be idle to pay any regard to dreams, and for that reason went back to bed again. He had not been long asleep, before he again saw his friend covered with blood and wounds, and beseeching him since he had not thought proper to succour him whilst he was living; to go to the gate of the city, and stop his body, which the inn-keeper, who had murdered him, was carrying off in a dung-cart. The Arcadian, who was struck much more with this second vision than he had been with the first, ran to the city-gate; presently after which he saw the dung-cart, and ordering it to be stoppt, the body was found. The murderer was then seized and put to death \*."

This story is also related by Valerius Maximus †; and since several illustrious authors have judged proper to transmit it to posterity, I do not know what right any person has to look upon it as fabulous. If incidents affirmed by the most famous writers may be considered as impostures and falsities, what a wide field would this open to scepticism? In this case there would be nothing which we might not doubt the truth

\* Cicero de Divinat. Lib. I. page 52.

† Val. Max. Lib. I. Cap. viii. page 38.

of. I do not see any good reason which ought to induce us to believe, that Tully intended to impose on his readers, and attempt to make one believe a story to which he himself gave no credit. Persons may justly consider as absurd, the miraculous tales which are found in the writings of a friar, though the falsity of it cannot be intirely demonstrated; such persons have very just reason for their unbelief, since the interest which the friars have, to favour superstition, may prompt them to invent fictions, to which they endeavour to give an air of truth: But could a Roman consul, a philosopher, in fine, a person of Tully's character, be guilty of such great weakness? Could there be any motive which should prompt him to impose upon mankind; and could he hope to reap any advantage from their credulity?

To the dream related by this great man, I shall add that which Mahommed II. had, the night before the taking of Constantinople, an account of which is found in all the authors who have writ the life of this emperor. He imagined he saw an old man of a gigantic stature, who came down from heaven; and put at several times, a ring on each of his fingers. Being awaked, he caused his dream to be interpreted, when he was assured, that he should obtain the empire of Greece. Immediately he stormed the city of Constantinople, and won that imperial city, which all his successors have made the place of their residence ever since.

There are a great many more incidents like to that I have related, which shew that dreams are often revelations from heaven. An illustrious Neapolitan philosopher mentions several; and affirms that he himself was witness to a circumstance of a very extraordinary nature. He relates that a shepherd, being asleep in a place at a considerable distance from his flock, dreamt that a wolf was carrying off a sheep, which he described to his son, and bid him rise. The latter having obeyed his father's orders, found that  
the



the wolf was really tearing to pieces the very sheep which had been specified to him \*.

I wonder, excellent Monceca, that any person should pretend to reject the truth of divine dreams, after so many evident proofs have been given of the reality of them. To confirm the reality of a thing in the strongest manner, what more can be desired than incidents attested by great men living in all ages? The ancients as well as moderns are united in their attestations of the truth of several nocturnal revelations. This must be allowed by every person who is not an absolute sceptic in history. There remains only one weak objection to be urged by such as persist obstinately in their opinion; viz. to say that dreams, which may have been supposed to be sent from heaven, were really produced by natural effects, and that chance made them true. But this objection will be of no force; for what may not that person deny who is for ascribing all things to chance? In this case, the most visible actions of providence would be looked upon as the mere sport of fortune. Whenever vice is punished it will be called chance; and the same whenever virtue is rewarded. Should God work a miracle to manifest his power, this likewise will be ascribed to chance. Nothing can be more dangerous than a system that allows too much extent to the concurrence of second causes; and free-thinkers are pleased with the words Chance and Fortune.

Farewell, dear Monceca; live contented and happy; and be speedy in thy answer to this letter.

\* Alexander ab Alexandro, Genial. Dierum, Libr. I. cap. xvi.

## LETTER CXC.

Aaron Monceca's answer to Onis's letter concerning the reality of dreams; wherein he endeavours to prove the absurdity of supposing dreams to be of any consequence, with regard to future events.—  
A merry story of a parish priest and a country girl.

## AARON MONCECA TO ISAAC ONIS.

Edinburgh. —

I Shall here answer, good Isaac, the letter thou favouredst me with concerning the reality of divine dreams. I am surprized that a philosopher of thy character, and who is so well acquainted with the most secret springs of superstition, should adopt so ill-grounded an opinion, as that which supposes something supernatural in dreams. To cure thee of thy error, I will answer all thy objections separately, and in the same order in which thou hast laid them down.

Thy opinion is first of all grounded on our sacred books. They indeed make some mention of supernatural dreams, but then they speak only of a miraculous thing, on which we ought not to ground a general belief. They even advise us, in several places, not to give the least belief to dreams\*. They inform us, that nocturnal illusions have misled multitudes. They go farther by commanding us not to give credit to them. "You shall not have any soothsayers," say they to us, "nor pay any regard to dreams; and shall not employ the art of divination after the manner of the heathens." Here we have a very clear and express command, and which, if I mistake not, plainly permits us to reject whatever may be said in favour of the mysterious part which is said to be contained in certain dreams.

What thou observest, good Isaac, with respect to some learned men who have asserted thy opinion, may be easily invalidated. All eminent men are so far from countenancing the reality of supernatural dreams, that thou pretendest, that I find that several of the most

\* Ecclesiast. V. 23; & XXXIV. passim.

shining genius's, in all ages, have opposed this belief. Aristotle makes no distinction between dreams, and ascribes them all to natural causes. He says that good people are commonly favoured with more agreeable dreams than the wicked, because their minds are at ease, and they are not tortured by remorse \*. Cicero, whose authority thou hast cited, is, of all philosophers, the greatest stickler against nocturnal revelations. He indeed produces several reasons to authorize them: But he quite invalidates their authority. The only reason why he starts objections to himself is, to have the better opportunity of establishing his system, by shewing the falsity of such as might be objected to him. Farther, the Academics used always to manage their disputations in manner following; the opinions, on both sides, were carried as far as possible; and the decision was not pronounced till after they had been long examined. It is therefore no ways surprizing that Tully, who was one of that sect of philosophers, should have instanced every particular which might contribute to prove the reality of supernatural dreams. He was sensible, that he could shew the impossibility of this whenever he might judge proper. To be convinced of this truth, we need but give some little attention to his arguments. "Nothing is so plain," says he "as that the Gods have no concern in the dreams of mortals. Were they the dispensers of them, they doubtless would have us take advantage of their gifts in order to foretel things to come. But what man reaps any benefit from his dreams? Who is able to understand the mysterious sense couch'd under them? How many people consider them as illusions and chimeras; and who contemn, as weak and superstitious persons, those who endeavour to interpret them? It must be confessed that the Gods put themselves to pains to little purpose. They give counsels to men during their sleep, which they not only entirely disregard, but have not the least idea of them in their memories. Since the Deities know the most secret

\* Aristotel. Eth. ad Nicom. Libr. I. Cap. xiii. pag. 189.

though

thoughts of mortals, and whatever they ought to do to make themselves agreeable to them ; they consequently cannot employ, in order to reveal to them their will, dreams, which they are sensible mortals cannot comprehend, or will make no use of. This is such a conduct as is entirely repugnant to the character and wisdom of the Gods\*."

After this philosopher has shewn, by several other decisive reasons, the impossibility of there being such things as supernatural dreams, he at last proves, by a single reflection, the folly of those who give credit to, and the ignorance of such as pretend to explain them. "Though I should even grant," says he, (which I shall never do) the reality of nocturnal inspirations, yet such inspirations would always be to no purpose ; no person having learning enough to explain them. To what purpose therefore should the Gods communicate to us counsels which we ourselves cannot comprehend, nor be instructed in by others ? This would be as ridiculous in them, as it would be for some Carthaginian or Spanish ambassadors, to make a speech in their language to the senate of Rome, without having an interpreter with them†." It is here, worthy Isaac, we are to refer the two certain axioms of Mallebranche. "The Deity never does any thing in vain. It always acts by the simplest methods." What can be more useless than counsels given in dreams ? and can any thing be more perplexed and confounding ?

To continue, dear Isaac, the examinations of thy objections, I now proceed to such historians as have transmitted to posterity a great number of dreams, the causes of which have been ascribed to the Deity. The authority of these writers, in matters of philosophy, is looked upon to be very insignificant. An historian ought to relate prodigies which are in vogue ; but it is the business of a naturalist to enquire, whether

\* Cicero de Divinat. Libr. II. Cap. xx. pag. 405.

† Cicero de Divinat. Libr. II. Cap. xlii. pag. 420.



they are owing to the causes to which they are commonly ascribed. Is any person so credulous as to believe all the miracles which are told in Livy? They are considered as the effect of superstition. Nevertheless Livy ought not to be blamed for relating them. He wrote the history of a country where those false miracles were considered as the most undoubted truths. He was obliged to suit himself to the genius of his fellow-citizens. He was not required, by his character, to enter into a philosophical detail; and he did his duty if he related things in such a manner, as might give his readers an opportunity to judge of the truth of them. An historian who relates a prodigy which he himself knows to be false, and endeavours to persuade the belief of it by far-fetched reasons, fails in his duty: But if he contents himself with relating simply what mankind in general have said of it, he ought not to be censured for it, as he only discharges his duty; it is the reader's business to judge whether mankind have mistook. An historian ought to be considered as the reporter of a case in law, and a philosopher as the judge of it.

As to the learned, friend Isaac, whom thou speakest of as favourers of supernatural dreams, and among whom thou rankest Alexander ab Alexandro, I confess that some have been carried away by the prejudices of education; and who, far from endeavouring to enlighten the mind, have spent their whole lives, in searching for reasons to confirm them in their errors. This is the case of thy Alexander, the disciple of Junianus Majus, a Neapolitan. He informs us that, from his early youth, he used to see flocking daily to his master, whose profession was to interpret dreams, a multitude of people of all ranks and conditions, whose dreams he always interpreted in so clear and exact a manner, that many, by his counsels, escaped the greatest misfortunes and preserved their lives\*. I would submit to thy consideration, dear

Isaac,

\* Ad eum memini, cum puer adhuc essem, & ad capiendum ingenii cultum, frequens apud eum ventitarem, quotidie, somniantium

Isaac, whether the authority of this Alexander, who had been so prejudiced from his youth, in favour of an opinion which he never examined afterwards, ought to be of any weight? To convince thee intirely how little it ought to be credited by a philosopher, I would but observe to thee, that this Junianus Majus, whose vast erudition is so much cry'd up by his pupil, was called a cheat and an impostor, by less prejudiced Literati†.

If thou wouldest but reflect, worthy Isaac, on the impertinent stuff which has been writ by some learned men, who were persuaded of the reality of supernatural dreams, thou wilt be obliged either to pity their error, or to censure their impudence; some of them having written such absurd things, that one would naturally conclude, that they wanted to take advantage of the weakness of mankind, rather than to inform them of their real sentiments. Cælius Rhodiginus asserts with the utmost gravity\*, that those who sleep in sheep-skins are favoured with true dreams; and gives us a long dissertation on this subject, in which he explains the Belief of what the heathens entertained with respect to skins of certain animals. Are not these reflections highly worthy a philosopher! It must be confessed, that if they are true, the Deity is particularly fond of revealing himself to butchers and shepherds; and that princes, and all persons of a certain rank, are deprived of his revelations. Pliny indeed has applied a remedy to this inconvenience; he informing us, that the stone called by the Greeks, Eumeces, which resembles a

nantium turbam, hominesque celebri fama & multi nominis, de somniis consultum venisse. Declarabat definiebatque, ille, non brevitur aut subobscurus... Multi quoque, illius monitu, vitæ interitum, nonnunquam animi ægritudines, vitarunt. Alexander ab Alexandro, Genial. Dicrum. Libr. I. Cap. XL pag. 82.

† Avorum quoque memoria, hanc in Italia vanissime profitebatur artem Junianus Majus. Mart. del Rio Disquisit. Magicar. Libr. IV. Cap. III. Quest. II. pag. 218.

\* Cæl. Rhodig. Lect. Antiquar. Libr. XXVII. Cap. XIV. pag. 607.

flint, being laid under a person's head when asleep, occasions true visions†. This way of procuring revelations is much more agreeable, and less offensive to the nose, than the former, and persons of a high rank may make use of it without any reluctance. However, there still remains a circumstance in it that is not very pleasing; since a person might run the hazard of getting a bump upon his forehead, in case he was to use the stone Eumeces by way of bolster. And indeed, we may suppose that such a person could not be permitted to lay it under a bolster; for then, those parts of the Deity which issue from the flint, being stopt by a foreign body, could not be able to penetrate into the head; by which means the bolster, at most, would receive the celestial counsels. I could almost burst, good Isaac, with laughing, when I reflect on this nonsense.

Cardan found out a way to compensate for the want of the miraculous stone; he declaring that the scriptures, laid under one's bolster, produce true dreams. And if the scriptures are not to be had, he says that the books of those doctors may be used, whom the Nazarenes call the Fathers of the Church\*. As to the last mentioned works, I could easily suppose them to be endued with a soporific virtue; but in order that the dose might work well, it is my opinion that the person who was to use it, ought, before he went to bed, to read half a page of the writings of St. Bernard, St. Gregory, Anselm, or others of the like stamp. I do not wonder, dear Isaac, that Cardan should have ascribed to some books the faculty of procuring dreams. He himself communicated that faculty to his whole family; and indeed, any one who had the happiness of being related to him, was sure to be inspired every night. Had a person been no nearer related than Don Japhet of Armenia was to the emperor Charles V. that is in the twentieth and eighteenth degree‡, he was sure of dream-

† Plin. Hist. Natur. Libr. XXXVII. Cap. X.

\* Cardan. de Rer. Variet. Libr. VIII. cap. III. pag. 103.

‡ Voyez Don Japhet d' Armenie, Comedie de Scaron.

ing supernaturally, and more than a quantum sufficit. It is he who informs us of so singular a circumstance\*. After this, can we doubt of its being authentic; and must not that person be a strange infidel, who should reject it is an idle tale, unworthy a man of learning; and capable of bringing an odium on all those who have writ to assert the reality of supernatural dreams?

I am of opinion that we may very safely rank the dream which Mahommed II. had, the night before the taking of Constantinople, in the same class with those of Cardan's kinsmen, it appearing to be built on as slight a foundation. This emperor was an artful cheat, and a man of no religion, who did not scruple to employ any methods which might assist him in the execution of his projects. He doubtless knew very well the great ascendant which superstition has over the human mind; before he gave orders to a general storm against Constantinople, he was extremely desirous of persuading his soldiers, that heaven had promised him the empire of Greece. The character of this conqueror, whom all the historians reproach with denying the existence of God, certainly did not make him worthy of being favoured with revelation. If Mahommed had not taken Constantinople, his dream would have been utterly disregarded: It was fortune only that rendered it divine; and it is that power also who has given credit to all those which are perpetually trumpeted about.

The pretended interpretations made of dreams are so uncertain, that those who set up for interpreters of them contradict one another. A man who had resolved to run in the Olympic Games, dreamt that he was lightly carried on a car drawn by four horses. Upon consulting a soothsayer, he was assured, that he would win the race by the swiftness of his coursers. To be still surer of the event, the person in question consulted another soothsayer, who returned him an answer directly opposite to the for-

\* Cardan. de Rer. Variet. Libr. VIII. Cap. III. pag. 107.



mer; "do not you see, says he to him; that you will be preceded by four competitors, since four horses are to run before you?"

A cheat who pretended to interpret dreams, and had settled in the suburbs of St. Germans, adjoining to Paris told a young man, who consulted him about a dream in which he saw his mistress, putting a ring on the tip of his finger, that he would soon marry her. But another cheat, who lived in St. Honore-street, assured him, that since she had put the ring only on the tip of his finger, the match would be brought almost to a conclusion, but that it would quite break off on a sudden. By only crossing the new bridge in Paris, the revelations of the Deity were directly contrary. Was not this man finely instructed?

It were to be wished, friend Isaac, that all false prophets, who serve only to increase superstition, and trouble weak minds, had been punished, in all ages, with the utmost severity. However, I would have had a certain parish-priest, who pretended to this art, spared, and that for the sake of an artifice he employed. He was in love with a young country girl, but could not hit upon any expedient to rank her in the number of his beloved flock. Peggy, for so the young maiden was called, had been married not many days before to Colin, who had courted her for a twelvemonth; and the disquietudes of the marriage-state had not yet lessened the violence of his passion. This perplexed the parish-priest, who could not think of a stratagem to satiate his desires. However, fortune stood his friend at a time that he least expected it. Peggy having had a dream, and a frightful one, in which she fancied she saw a black and hideous phantom, who stabbed her dear spouse; she started from her slumbers and flew to the priest. "Good doctor, says she, I am come to tell you a sad, sad dream; and beseech you to inform me what I must do to save my husband's life." The parish-priest having listened to her dream with a grave face; and squeezed her hand in such a manner as spoke the adulterer

adulterer rather than the conjurer; "I cannot, Peggy, conceal the truth from you, says he." "Honest Colin is threatned with a sad calamity. I know but one way to save his life. "What can that way be?" replied the pretty country-woman. Tell me what it is, and I'll give you whatever you shall ask." "I desire no other reward, replied the liquorish priest, but your heart." Explaining himself afterwards more fully, Peggy resisted his desire at first; but at last, the fear of the danger which menac'd Colin, made her consent to the proposal of the prognosticator, something more pleasingly than Alceste to that of the resurrection of Admetus. "And now, says the priest to her, I will interpret the dream: The Phantom you saw, is the spirit of contradiction, so common in married women, and which frequently annoys very much the peace of husbands. To prevent Colin from being ever tormented with it, be always submissive and faithful to him; and then you need not be afraid that his life will be in any danger." The exhortation, dear Isaac, was exemplary and pastoral; and accordingly it produced the most happy effects in Peggy's mind. "Thank ye good doctor, says she, for your good advice. If I ever happen to be disturbed again with bad dreams, I will not fail to come and see you again; upon condition of paying for the interpretation of it in the same coin, and as cordially."

Enjoy thy health, dear Isaac, may thy life be propitious and happy; and do not entertain an idle opinion with respect to the reality of dreams. To-morrow I shall set out for Paris, and will not write till I am arrived in that city.

## L E T T E R CXCI.

Onis's observations on the treatment that the young Chinese, who was brought into France by father Fouquet, met with.— He thinks the priests ought to be treated as the Bonzes are in China.— A strange story of the statue of St. Turpin, in a church at Languedoc.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

Grand-Cairo.—

**T**H Y letter, worthy Monceca, on the adventure of the Chinese who had been brought into France by Fouquet the Jesuit\*, gave me infinite pleasure. I discovered, in this entertaining story which at the same time was so fatal to this unhappy foreigner, the political conduct of the society; and, I don't doubt but that the Jesuits would treat, after the same manner, any person who should endeavour to oppose their designs. If it was in the power of those reverend fathers to imprison the Jansenists in Bicetre, and cause them to be scourged there, for the greater Glory of God, the Chinese would have a great number of companions. In fact, it would not be very improper should all the enthusiasts meet with the like treatment; and it is my opinion, that such a remedy would be much more effectual to cure them of their folly, than the best written and most learned dissertation. It is true, indeed, that after having scourged the followers of abbot Paris, to check all their extravagancies, it would not be improper to chastise the Jesuits in the like manner, to punish them for their wicked actions.

To say the truth, dear Monceca, it is shameful that in so well governed a state as that of France, some enthusiasts and ambitious crabbed divines should be permitted, to disturb incessantly the public tran-

\* See the CXLVIIth Letter.

quility. I am certain, that had Fouquet, the Chinese Jesuit, been told the disputes between the Jansenists and Molinists, he would have carried into his native country a still more unfavourable idea of the French. "What! (would he say) this people, who know so well how to scourge strangers, have not the sense to scourge their Bonzes? Were he to imitate the Chinese, he would change his method. Instead of abusing those who come to him, he would make the priests responsible, not only for the ridiculous follies which they make people give into, but also for the idols which they serve. St. Paris turns the brain of many Parisians. Come, Mr. Parish Priest of St. Madrid, you shall pay for your saint, and be heartily scourged. St. Ignatius occasions many troubles in the kingdom; down with your breeches, reverend Fathers, you shall be heartily scourged. If the directors of spiritual farces were to be scourged after this way, they at last would give over." Thou knowest dear Monceca, that the Chinese act in this manner. The Bonzes answer for all the good or evil actions of the idols they attend upon; and, since they receive the profit of the offerings which are made them, it is but just that they should pay, in return, for all the evils they occasion. It very frequently happens that a man, who has burnt, to no purpose, incense before a statue, to which he may have offered up many sacrifices, exasperated at his having spent his money in vain, prosecutes the Bonzes, and requires the priest to answer for the inattention and disregard of the idol; and the prosecution is generally terminated in favour of the plaintiff.

Give me leave to put thee in mind of what thou thyself formerly wrote to Jacob Brito, as extracted from a voyage written by a Jesuit\*. "A Chineze, who had a very fantastical and churlish idol, exasperated at the needless expence he had long been at on its account; and being unwilling to be imposed upon by so malicious a God, summoned him to appear

\* See the LVth Letter.

before



before the supreme council of Pekin. After several examinations, in which the Bonzes made the best defence they could for their idol, the idolater at last gained the cause. The court, having regard to the petition of the Chineze, sentenced the idol, as useless in the kingdom, to perpetual banishment. The temple was demolished; and the Bonzes who officiated at his altar were severely punished; provided, however, that they might address other courts in the province, to compensate for the chastisement they had received for the love of the idol in question."

Some decrees issued from the parliament in Paris, resembling those of the supreme council of Pekin, would soon restore tranquility to the diocese. For few Jansenists would devote themselves to the service of abbot Paris, should every one of them be forced to submit to a scourging, every time any person has any cause to complain of him. Scarce would the posteriors of the fathers of the oratory, of the Benedictines, and other followers of that pretended saint, be sufficient to receive the lashes, which would be liberally bestowed by the mad enthusiasts, when recovered from their frenzy they would complain of their having whistled, sung, danced, capered, cried and howled, for many years. What a number of rods and thongs would those employ, who, after having made many nine days devotion, burnt a great number of fine wax tapers, and mumbled over innumerable anthems and prayers, in order to be cured of their diseases, were yet unable to obtain any favour from the blessed Paris, who was as deaf and obstinate as the Chineze idol?

If the Jansenists, dear Monceca, were in danger of being ill-treated, with regard to their saint, I imagine that the Jesuits, on the other hand, would not meet with better usage; and that they would often be punished with great severity. What a number of complaints would people bring against St. Ignatius? They would charge him with having founded an extravagantly-ambitious society, which is calculated only to disturb the peace of states. Not only

only the clergy would publickly inveigh against the morality of his followers; but even a great number of private persons would complain, that after having been two years together in his congregations, carefully said over his litanies, as well as those of St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis Borgia, the blessed Lewis of Gonzaga, and Stanislaus Kostka, their domestic concerns continued in as unhappy a condition as ever, and their health in as ill a state. On grievances of so serious a nature, an arret of the parliament of Paris would come out, "which, doing justice to the complainants against the Jesuits, would give orders for their being seized, both in the college of Lewis XIV. in the Noviciat, and the house for the probationers; to be afterwards conveyed to the court of the Sorbonne, and there, in presence of all the doctors, to be scourged for the faults committed by St. Ignatius, and the rest of the saints, &c. of the society; whose temples would be razed to the ground, the idols broke to pieces, and the priests driven out of the kingdom: Provided, however that the said Jesuits may be permitted to address the court of Rome, to indemnify themselves for the punishment they might have undergone for the love of three or four saints who had been rashly canonized."

Methinks, dear Monceca, such a decree would be of great service to France. It would be of much more advantage than such as are daily made, to suppress the instructions of some Jansenist and Molinist bishops, who seem to contend who shall best foment troubles and divisions. I likewise do not doubt, but that if the government was to punish with severity all the errors and obstinate behaviour of the Nazarene saints, who, after having been so much illuminated, gilded, and entertained with gay festivals and excellent concerts, frequently quite disregard those who have done them such important services; I do not doubt, I say, but they would insensibly lose all their credit. All the Nazarenes in less than a year, would address their vows and prayers to the Deity only. "How! would a Capuchin say, shall I run the ha-

zard of getting two hundred stripes, with regard to St. Francis, who, possibly, after having been treated in the kindest manner, may laugh both at the priest and the supplicant? No, no, by my troth, won't I. I will address my prayers to heaven only, by which I shall secure my shoulders." The Jesuits would speak after the same manner, and all their followers would soon imitate them. The Janfenists themselves, how obstinate soever they may be, would not be so stupid as to bring a punishment upon themselves; and if, by chance, some of them should indulge their enthusiasm so far, their banishment from France, expressed by the arret, would soon restore the kingdom in question to a wished for tranquillity; would put a stop to all the pious frauds employed by the friars, and prevent their inventing new ones daily.

Whilst I was in Germany, a Frenchman at whose house I lodged, told me a pleasant story to this purpose. "There was, says he, in a church in a little town in Languedoc, a statue, which was said to have formerly wrought a great number of miracles. About an hundred years ago, whether it were that his internal virtue was evaporated, or that the spirit of the saint who formerly tenanted it was weary of its case, and had taken up its residence in another, it no longer produced a single miracle; and its worship was greatly diminished. Scarce were burnt, in the course of a year, five or six little wax tapers in its honour, and matters had been carried so far, that many a female devotee used to pass irreverently before it without bending; ever so little, the knee. And now a friar took it in his head to restore the reputation of that image; for which purpose some miraculous adventure was necessary, which might inform the public, in the most conspicuous manner, that it had lost no part of its ancient power; and he pondered in himself what kind of disease it would be proper for him to make the statue heal. "Should I publish, says this master monk very judiciously, that the saint cured all diseases of the eyes, I shall bring upon myself

the adherents and priests of Sancta Lucia; and they will not fail to oppose the reputation of my image, which would lessen that of theirs. Should I suppose some other disease, I should be subject to the like inconvenience. There is no human indisposition but has its physician in the court of heaven. The best thing I can therefore do will be to ascribe to my image the power of curbing all carnal sensations. There indeed remains one difficulty, which is, that those who shall come to offer up their prayers to my saint, may, at first, imagine they have received some favour from it. I perhaps lay too much stress on the strength of the imagination of those who shall offer up their prayers; as it may not perhaps produce the effects which I hope to receive from it; so that the credit of my saint will be soon ruined.

"Whilst the friar was in this perplexity, he called to mind that he had heard a friend of his, a physician, say, that camphire wore next to the skin, or drunk in powder in a liquor, would suppress all amorous passions. "Right! cries he, there's my business done. I'll fill my Agnus's with camphire. I shall give notice that no person will be cured, except that, pursuant to the intention of the saint, he shall always wear 'em on his stomach; and when that will not be sufficient, and that the constitution will bear up against the relick, I'll prescribe the drinking of a camphirated liquor, to which I'll give the name of my saint's oil." The instant he had got ready a sufficient quantity of these pretended remedies, he went up into the pulpit, and raised in his sermon, the credit of St. Turpin infinitely above that of the ordinary saints. "They confine themselves, cried he, purely to the healing of the diseases of the body, but St. Turpin weakens and destroys the temptations of the soul."

"As no one had heard, during a long time, of Mr. St. Turpin, they were greatly surprized at what the preacher said, who, to enforce his discourse the more, assured his auditors, that he himself had experienced what he advanced. His pretended cure



was looked upon as a miracle, even to unbelievers; who were surprized to hear the reverend father Anselme, one of the smartest Franciscans in the kingdom, affirm, that he was unmoved when by the finest women, as Girard the Jesuit when with Miss Cadiere. Immediately a numberless multitude of devotees flocked to him from all parts, in order to put a stop to their temptations. One prayed that the image of her spiritual director might not follow her every where; and that it might not trouble her in the midst of her prayers. Another wished that she might be able to resist the passion she had for the prior. A third begged she might have strength of mind sufficient to resist a young Abbe, who had made himself so far master of the out-works, that if the saint did not work a miracle, in four and twenty hours she should be forced to capitulate.

“Nor did the male devotees flock in fewer numbers to implore St. Turpin’s succour. An old canon prayed to have grace enough to be able to resist the charms of a pretty girl, his servant; a judge to withstand those of a fair young client; a cit to resist the enticements of his wife’s friend; and a decrepit peasant to withstand the impudent advances of a smart little chambermaid, equally faithless and wanton.

“The monk gave all the persons in question a great quantity of Agnus’s, which had touched the saint’s head; and when there were not Agnus’s sufficient, he ordered them to drink, every morning three spoonfuls of the camphirated liquor. The dose did not fail to work with some; a circumstance which was sufficient to give a surprizing reputation to the relicks, and to the oil of the blessed St. Turpin, which were sought for ten leagues round. Among those who flock’d on this occasion was a girl about sixteen or seventeen, beautiful, finely shaped, having a soft and modest air, but an excessively tender heart. Above six months before, a certain young man called Peter, had found out the secret to obtain the last favour. His passion was equal to that of the fair-one. Nevertheless, some remains of shame, or rather of fear,  
still

still combated against him in his mistress's heart. She sometimes formed a design to break off an engagement, which made her dread the pains of hell; and commonly took that resolution, when she assisted at the sermon of her parish priest. But the instant she was got home, the sight of Peter, and his tender discourses, made all her fine projects vanish. Having heard of the mighty miracles which St. Turpin wrought, she had recourse to him, and went for some of his Agnus's. The friar, as he put them into her hands, found himself struck with a deadly shaft; and, in the midst of his antidotes, drank copious draughts of the poison of love. He wished from his heart that the relics might not work, and soon had reason to be satisfied; for the Agnus having prevailed nothing, the fair-one came and desired to have a vial of the holy oil. On the contrary, he had prepared a liquor whose property was to heat, hoping that her repeated visits would at last be of advantage to him. She made him several; and having by this means got acquainted with her by insensible degrees; "You have come," says he to her one day, "so often to implore the aid of the saint, that the devil of lust you are tortured with, must be very obstinate. I'll ease you of it, if it lies in my power. Come this evening to the gate of the convent at the hour of pardon. I'll give you a bottle, in which you'll find a double dose, and will add another remedy to it." "I shall be greatly obliged to you," replied the young patient, "for the saint's oil does more harm than good. I waited for Peter to come and visit me, before I took any, but now I'll go and look for him." "The devil take the saint and his oil," cried the friar. "I could not have thought that I was working for Peter. Away, away, my girl; to cure your temptations you have no farther occasion for Agnus's nor bottles of oil."

I do not know, dear Monceca, whether the government could justly punish this Franciscan, in case justice was to be administered in France after the Chinese manner. In my opinion, he had a lawful excuse. "You come," might he say, "to beseech the

faint to preserve your chastity, at the time that you have actually lost it. St. Turpin has, indeed, the power to keep maidenheads, but not to mend them." A distinguish of the schools would have been extremely proper on that occasion. "My faint puts a stop to temptations which are begun, Concedo ; but to stop the course of those into which one may have already fallen, Nego."

Enjoy thy health, dear Monceca ; may thy life be contented and happy ; and take care not to fall into the hands of scourgers.

## LETTER CXCII.

The different characters of the people of France and England, compared ; viz. of the clergy, nobility and common people.—The ridiculous constraint put upon men of learning and genius in France, is of great detriment to the advancement of useful knowledge.

### AARON MONCECA TO ISAAC ONIS.

Paris.—

**I**T is now a week, excellent Isaac, since my arrival in Paris, and all that time I have spent in examining the difference there is between the character of the French, and that of the English. Tho' I should stay ten years together in this city, that time, though so very long, would not be sufficient for the reflections which the subject suggests.

The first thing that struck me, at my return to France, was the power of the ecclesiastics. I have seen priests in London, whose authority did not reach beyond the door of their church ; bishops who had no other power than that of regulating and governing their clergy : And I found, in France, churchmen who were extremely ambitious ; watchful of every opportunity to incroach upon the rights of the laity ; forming, in the midst of a state, a distinct and separate state ; tyrants in lawn sleeves, to whom the name of prelate is given, almost all equally pro-

of their rank, which, by means of an old superstition, secures to them impunity with regard to any faults they may commit ; declaring things as the rights of the church, which are most distant from it ; ruining unmercifully those whom they hate, by accusing them of being Jansenists ; exerting their utmost endeavours to destroy the authority of the parliaments ; and to depreciate, in the monarch's mind, those assemblies ; always careful to support, to the utmost of their power, the rights and privileges of the nation, against the invasions of the pope of Rome, the head, the genius, and the soul of the bishops of France.

The nobility and gentry of France, in general, seem to me to differ as much from those of England, as the ecclesiastics of Paris differ from those of London. I have seen, in this last mentioned city, persons of distinction curious to inform themselves of the interest of their country ; study the maxims and manners of foreign kingdoms ; considering ignorance as an ignominious blemish, that degrades man, and puts him upon a level with brutes ; cultivating the arts and sciences ; protecting and rewarding the learned, and contemning such nations as have another way of thinking. I met, in Paris, with people whose only care was to attend to their perukes, or to the play of the knots of their ribbons ; who were as ignorant of the rights, the privileges, and fundamental laws of their country, as the mad enthusiasts are of reason or good sense, and the Jesuits of honesty, who almost blush at their being able to read ; imagine that philosophy and pedantry are synonymous terms ; who fancy that Descartes, whose name they hear of by chance, was a pedant in some school ; who have the utmost contempt for every man who imagines there are any perfect pleasures, except those of passing the whole night in drinking, sleeping away three quarters of the day ; and who exhibit their coxcomical figures in some tavern kitchen, where they flash away a numberless multitude of silly jokes.

However, this character, friend Isaac, does not suit all the better sort of people among the French.

We



We meet with in the city, and particularly among the magistrates, whose employments require them to study, many persons who think in a quite different manner from the nobility and gentry in general. But the genius of a nation must not be settled from the practice of a few. For one gentleman in France who applies himself to study, and adorns his mind with useful knowledge, how many of them spend their whole lives without reflecting one instant on any thing which may be of advantage to their country, or the advancement of the arts? Those persons who have lived some time in Paris, may discover that there are few countries in which young persons of distinction spend their time less in matters of consequence. Their life is a series of dissoluteness, which consequently can be of no advantage to themselves or their country. Such of the nobility and gentry as reside at their country seats, take a great delight in reading old romances. This is the employment of such among them as are desirous of making a figure, and distinguishing themselves from the rest. The rest pass their days in hunting, beating the country people, in getting with child their farmers daughters, in going to law with the parish priests of their villages about certain privileges; and in fuddling on Sundays with their stewards.

There appears to me, dear Isaac, between the common people among the English, and those of France, as wide a difference in their manner of thinking, as between the manners and inclinations of the ecclesiastics and nobility of the two nations in question. The common people of Paris are good-natured, affable, abhorers of rebellion, and lovers of strangers: Whereas those of London are brutal, excessively insolent, extravagantly fond of novelty, ever ready to rebel, hating all nations; possessing, in a word, all the faults of the nobility and gentry of their country, without having one of their virtues or good qualities. In my opinion, friend Isaac, to form a nation who might make sure approaches towards perfection, it ought to be composed of the common people among the French, and the better sort among the English;

English ; by which I understand all persons above the rank of artificers ; there being many merchants in London, who understand the law, philosophy, politics, &c. much better than many persons in France, whose employments oblige them to be skilled in the sciences. It is natural that where ignorance is considered as a vice among the nobility, all persons of a certain condition should endeavour to enlighten their minds, in order to gain vogue, and win the esteem and consideration of the public. There was a time in France in which it was thought shameful to be ignorant. Every one endeavoured to cultivate the polite arts and sciences, or at least would be thought desirous of cultivating them. One would be apt to conclude that the love of polite literature was buried in the same grave with Lewis XIV. but now, it is almost a shame for a person to be acquainted with any language but the French : And should this humour continue, people may perhaps go such lengths as not to dare to learn to read and write.

I do not write, worthy Isaac, but that the contempt in which the truly learned are held at Paris, depresses their minds. When the heart of a man is not raised by honours and applauses, the desire of distinguishing himself decays, and no longer prompts him to those noble enterprizes, which are formed only by persons of the greatest courage. To what purpose, would a learned man say who meets with contempt, is all the pains I take ! I write and study day and night ; I ruin my health, and I pass my days in striking out things which may be of service to the public ; and yet the public shall pay a higher regard to some rich ignorant fellow in a public office ; to an usurer who has fattened himself by the blood of the widow and the orphans, than to all the literari in Paris put together.

These complaints, dear Isaac, are but too just. Should Reaumur or Cassini take it into their heads to address themselves to some nobleman, they would be made to wait whole hours in his antichamber ; their merit being of no manner of service to a courtier

er. But should a man of business, possessed of an hundred thousand livres a year, appear, he is immediately introduced to my lord. Things are so miserably abused, that riches create respect to a knave, and merit cannot do the same to a man of honour. It is true, indeed, excellent Isaac, that there are still living some princes and noblemen, to whom learning and virtue only give access; but, as I before observed to thee, a certain number of choice people cannot be considered as a whole nation.

It is therefore no wonder that the present age does not give rise to such men as Descartes, Gassendi, Bayle, Racine, Boileau, Corneille and la Bruyere. After the death of Fontenelle, Voltaire, and Montequiou, should the genius which now prevails in Paris continue in the same state, no authors will be seen but those resembling Mouhi, and the Journalist of Trevoux. Writers will then be prompted by no other motives than those of want, or a desire of slandering; and consequently they will not be animated by glory, or a laudable ambition. At most there will start up several half-learned writers, who distinguished by the vain title of Academicians, will industriously cultivate the trifling talent of ranging words: And endeavour to write pieces that will appear so many music-books, rather than compositions made to adorn and improve the human mind. The reader will meet with cadence and harmony in their periods, but with nothing else; and his surprize will be great to meet with nothing but sounds, where he expected to meet with things.

The constraint which is put upon men of letters, authorizes greatly this depraved taste. Besides the contempt in which they are held, they are not allowed to write with that liberty so necessary in the commonwealth of learning. An author is obliged to say every moment as he is writing; "I must change that phrase, otherwise I shall very much disgust the reverend father of la Maison Professe. This phrase would bring me under a suspicion of being a Jansenist. It indeed presents a shining truth to the mind; but then

then I ought not to run the hazard of being imprisoned in the Bastile, merely for the satisfaction of speaking a truth.—Here's a character; but I must be forced to suppress it. It describes a general character to admiration; and yet it might be applied to the bishop of \* \* \* ; and, in that case, I shall be inevitably ruined. This stroke, which so happily describes the pride of great men, would do me prejudice; and for this reason it shall never be published; since the duke or marquis of \* \* \* might imagine that I hinted at them. That expression is too bold: It would offend the bastard to the apothecary of one of our secretaries of state; and this might disgust his valet-de-chambre's mistress. This whole chapter shall likewise be suppressed; since it may prevent my having a licence to print my book, and possibly make the world look upon me as an atheist: I therein discuss some philosophical questions, whence consequences may be drawn to depreciate St. Pantaleon's slipper, St. Ignatius's os pubis, and Charlemagne's shoulder-belt; and and what is worse, the holy vial."

So ridiculous a constraint, joined to the little regard shewn to men of true learning, will insensibly ruin polite literature, in case it should last for any time. The French in the succeeding age will be much upon a level with the Spaniards of the present. They will have no other compositions, except the devout rhapsodies of the friars, and a parcel of romances. This sad truth begins already to be felt in Paris; the merit of the books which are published there consisting wholly in the title. Such, for instance, are father Regnault's Physical Conversations, and father Poree's Orations, writ in such a style as can only deprave that of all young students, and stuffed with childish and ridiculous antitheses. It is very strange they should have given any pleasure to those who heard them spoke: And indeed, they were immediately sensible of their error, as soon as they had an opportunity of reading them. What can be more contemptible, more goveling, more bombast, and more like the poet's sonnet in Moliere's Misanthrope in a word,  
more



more opposite to the purity of Cicero's diction, than that passage in which the Jesuit in question speaks of the abode of Charles V. in Paris? "When a king, says he, jealous of an emperor's glory, embraced him as his friend, went with him as with his companion, put his faithful into his infidel hand, and chose to be thought over credulous rather than fore-sworn; all Europe saw a proof of the probity and honour of the French\*." Ever since the time of Petavius, of Bourdaloues, of Daniel, and such like, the Jesuits have produced none but indifferent authors; or those of the lowest class. This they themselves are perfectly sensible of, and for that reason they exclaim against the truly learned. They would not be so very jealous, were there still any great men among them. Perhaps they one day will have fine writers among them; in which case they will change their maxims; and, returning to their former opinion, they will condemn the taste and manner of writing of their brother Jesuit Poree; and utterly disown most of the compositions of a great number of scribblers, whom they now cry up as wonderful writers. However, they will have done great injury to the republic of letters; and their desire of reigning over it will be as prejudicial to reason, to good taste, and to style, as the insipid, childish writings of several Academicians now living.

I had a pleasant conversation some days since with one of the gentlemen in question. "You are lately come from England, says he to me. Might I make so free as to ask you in what state learning is there?" "It is carried, replied I, to a very great height.

\* Quo tempore ingens fidei documentum Europæ datum est, cum rex æmulus imperatorem æmulum excepit ut hospitem, amplexus est ut amicum, commitatus est ut socialem, dimisit ut socium, data in dexteram fallacem constanti dextera, maluitque videri male credulus quam male fidelis. Caroli Poree Orationes. The following words are inexpressibly ridiculous, maluitque videri mala credulus quam male fidelis. Those who understand Latin will easily perceive the childish antithesis in these words, Male credulus & male fidelis. Such a play of words would not be pardoned in a schoolboy.

The

The visions and chimeras of the schoolmen are entirely banished from Oxford and Cambridge? and in their room, the works of Newton, and those of Locke are explained. London boasts some excellent poets, who write on subjects that are of service to mankind. The famous Mr. Pope joins, to the charms of poetry, the doctrines of the most sage philosophy. In him Homer and Plato are united." "So much the worse for the English poetry, replied our Academician." "Why so much the worse, replied I?" "Because continued he no writer can express himself with great purity, when he treats of philosophical matters; at least it is so in the French tongue. The great number of Nows and Buts, which go before the conclusion of arguments, and a thousand other such words, grate most horribly on the ear. An academician ought to employ himself wholly in writing amorous adventures, billet-doux, and tender verses. In case he is not of an amorous disposition, he then may amuse himself with writing history; provided however, that his work does not swell to above two volumes in Duodecimo. It is impossible for a writer to correct and refine his diction, when he writes three volumes. Half a year ago I published a work consisting of six hundred pages, which I spent nine years in polishing; and indeed I have the greatest reason to be satisfied. There are but three Ands, two Buts, and one If, in my whole work, I hope in the second edition, that I shall be so happy as to expunge one But and two Ands: And to effect this, I must write fifteen pages anew; and I shall not regret the trouble I may have been at, provided I shall have executed my design."—"What book, says I to the Academician, is this, the correcting the stile of which cost such prodigious pains?" "It is a collection, replied he, of speeches and congratulatory compliments, which I spoke in the academy, at the reception of several members. There are twelve discourses in all; and every one of them contains an elogium of chancellor Seguier, of cardinal Richelieu, and of Lewis XIV." "I congratulate

tulate you, said I to this pedantic Academician, for employing nine years in expunging all the Ands and Buts in the twelve elogiums in question. This certainly was a time very happily employed, a toil greatly advantageous to civil society, and to the advancement of learning. It nevertheless may be wished, for the sake of the republic of letters, that the stile of those who are scared at a But or And may not eclipse those of Boileau, Sarasin, Pellisson and Patru." I then left my Academician, who appeared highly offended at my opinion, as at well as the freedom with which I told it him.

Enjoy thy health, dear Isaac; may thy life be a perpetual series of content and satisfaction; and be assured that I will see thee again before it is long.

### I. E T T È R CXCIIL.

The method of educating youth of distinction in France, described by a Jesuit; Monceca banters it; which occasions a long altercation between him and the Jesuit.

#### AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS

Paris. —

**I** Yesterday, friend Isaac, paid a visit to a Jesuit, whom I sometimes saw at chevalier de Maisin's. He is a polite man, of an amiable disposition, and very delightful in his conversation; so that I imagined it would be absolutely necessary for me to give him some marks of my esteem; and to do his brethren in Constantinople all the service in my power. His employment is one of the most considerable in his order. He is principal of the college of Lewis XIV. that is, first director of all the youths educated there, as well as of the several preceptors. I will confess to thee, that, abstracted from good manners, curiosity had a great share in my visit; and that I was delighted in having an opportunity to examine the manner

manner in which the youth of distinction among the French are educated.

At my coming into the college, I perceived a great number of students very busy in raising a stage in the center of a court. "For what use, reverend Father, says I to him, is this edifice designed?" "'Tis for a tragedy, replied he, which our students are going to perform here. You must come and see them; and be assured that it is one of the most delightful entertainments in Paris." "How, replied I, do you undertake to bring up persons who may one day be qualified to succeed such players as may drop off in the French play-house? I imagine that you taught none but the useful sciences; but now I find that there is no art, no profession, but you have masters for them. Since you breed players, you doubtless bring up likewise rope-dancers!"

This question made the Jesuit laugh heartily. "'Tis plain," says he to me, "that you are not yet acquainted with the customs of this country. Our reasons for making young students deliver speeches in public, is to accustom them, from their early years, to repeat a discourse with grace. We are not bringing up comedians, but orators, advocates, and preachers." "If this," replied, I, "is your design, methinks you take a very wrong method to succeed in it. Instead of making a student, whom you intend for the bar, speak two speeches of a tragedy, let him pronounce one of Patru's pleadings; and as for the scholars whom you intend for the pulpit, let them learn by heart Bourdaloue's sermons, and the bishop of Meaux's funeral orations. What affinity is there between the despair of Hermione, and the law; and what relation does the wild fury of Orestes bear to the sacred writings? Besides, this manner of speaking verse is directly opposite to the modest and edifying tone of voice required in a preacher; and to the simple, but masculine and nervous pronunciation required in pleaders at the bar. Do you imagine, re-



verend father, that were du Frene\*, to get up into the pulpit, he would have a very grave and very persuasive air and manner? Methinks I see him turning his eyes according to art, darting the most amorous glances at the saint whose panegyric he makes; and pronouncing the elogium of saint Genevieve in the same manner as that of Zayre. It is my opinion that Gaussin† would not make a better lawyer than du Frene a preacher. Let us suppose for an instant that this famous actress, cloathed in a pleader's gown, and holding a bag of papers, was to plead before the parliament. Her eyes would employ all their rhetoric in order to win the heart of her judges; and her heart would melt in favour of her client, whom she would bewail in the same plaintive tone that Andromache bewails the loss of her son. But to what purpose would all this be? To none at all; or at most to make the judges say, This little fellow is very like Columbine in the farce, where she represents the lawyer who pleads both for plaintiff and defendant, as well in the turn of her face, as in her manner of pleading. She would have made a very pretty player. I fancy, reverend father, it is the same with regard to the orators brought up by you. They always retain the air and manner taught them in the theatres of your college."

"There is some truth," replied the Jesuit, "in what you say. But if we should make our pupils pronounce pleadings and sermons, who, for God's sake, would come to hear them? We should lose the pleasure of seeing the pains we take in instructing them applauded by all Paris. All people do not speak in as solid a manner as you. It is of greater use for the glory of our society, to form theatrical pleaders and preachers, than to make excellent orators, who would not give the people in general an advantageous idea of our manner of education. When a lawyer pleads, the judges do not ask, whether he has been brought up among the Jesuits. If he has a graceful delivery,

\* A famous player at Paris.

† A celebrated actress, who succeeded le Couvreur.

delivery, we are not praised for it. It is the same with regard to a preacher in vogue; his hearers seldom or never enquiring after the place in which he was brought up." "According to this maxim," replied I, "methinks, reverend father, that you ought to suit all your instructions which you give to your pupils to the interest of the society; and that this ought to be the only circumstance attended to on that occasion." "As this interest," replied the Jesuit, is blended with that of religion, we make no difficulty of directing all the studies of our pupils to that end. This is a truth acknowledged by every good catholic, I mean by every man devoted to the holy see, viz. that we ought to banish, at least explode, all the sciences, which, by accustoming the mind to reason with too much boldness, and to go too deep in the enquiry of things, make it, insensibly, reject certain points of doctrine which appear contrary to reason and the light of nature; and yet are not, on that account, less essential articles of faith. Such are those of the belief of the pope's infallibility; of the necessity of extirpating both by fire and sword all heretics; and of considering as such, all who are not sautors of the society, which is the strongest support of the church." "These maxims," replied I, "are so repugnant to those notions and ideas which are acquired only by philosophy, that it is my opinion your pupils do not apply themselves much to it."

"We have entirely banished," replied the Jesuit, "from our schools, all the writings of the modern philosophers. We insinuate to our students, that Descartes, Locke, and Gassendi, were authors of very trifling abilities, who owe all their reputation to a love of novelty. We even treat those writers as persons either suspected, or convicted of heresy; and there are none of our professors of philosophy, but are sure to satyryze them in their compositions. Thus, aided by these prejudices, we utterly ruin their reputation in the minds of young people." "What science then," says I to the Jesuit, do you teach under the name of philosophy?" "We explain to them,"

replied he, "the doctrines of the Peripateticks and of the schoolmen." "How!" says I to him, "do you perplex the memory of your pupils with a numberless multitude of absurd, unintelligible and impertinent expressions? During whole years together, you oblige your scholars to study substantial forms, a parte mentis & rei, second intentions, arguments in Baroco, in Barbara, in Baralipson? I no longer wonder that when they come into the world, they should have the utmost contempt for every thing that bears the name of philosophy; and look upon all those as pedants who apply themselves to it. It is impossible but they should do so; for they cannot judge of a thing but by the knowledge they have of it. What a pitiful knowledge is this you ascribe to them! Henceforward, whenever I hear a Frenchman condemn the study of philosophy, I shall consider him as a man who had never drank any but bad wine; and who, imagining all the different wines equally bad, would consider all those as fools or madmen who should praise Burgundy and Champaign."

"This very distaste," replied the Jesuit, "which you censure so strongly, is what we endeavour to inspire into all our scholars; and this proves the glory and security of our society. We have long taken notice, that the knowledge of the sciences serves to no other purpose than to swell the minds of those who possess them. They have done infinite prejudice to the Jesuits, and to the court of Rome. Most of those among the laity especially, who are distinguished by their abilities, have signalized themselves by some invective levelled at our society. Thuanus has stigmatized it in many parts of his history. Pasquier has gone still greater lengths in his enquiries. How greatly has Pascal, Saci, and the anchorites of Portroyal, &c. injured it? Such are the pernicious consequences which arise when the laity apply themselves to sound learning. If all the persons in question had been as ignorant as those who are educated in our schools, they would never have taken it into their heads to write against us, nor to attack the Christian Religion

religion by injuring our society. As therefore it is for the interest of religion, and of our society, to have the sciences under-valued, can you wonder at our inveighing so strongly against every thing that bears the name of modern philosophy? Besides, this is what our greatest enemies teach. The professors of eloquence explain in their colleges the writings of Descartes; and Mallebranche was one of that philosopher's most zealous disciples. We are resolved not to bear the least similitude to persons, all whose actions we endeavour to blacken: We have the most just reasons to hate Descartes; all the anchorites of Port-Royal were his followers; and, during a certain time, Cartesians, Jansenists, and Anti-Jesuits, were synonymous words. As Nicole was one of the authors of the Art of Thinking, would it be natural for us to own that Aristotle's logic is not perfect? In doing this we should applaud one of our most dangerous enemies; this would be owning, that it was possible for a valuable book to come out of Port-Royal; and we publickly maintain a contrary opinion. Our father Bouhours endeavour'd to the utmost of his power to prove, that all the authors of Port-Royal were unskill'd in the French tongue; but the public were so obstinate as not to believe him."

"I am of opinion, reverend father," says I, "that father Bouhours's design was as chimerical, as that of proving that the Germans cannot possibly have wit. This would make me suspect, that the books which some learned men of that nation have writ against the Jesuits, are almost as valuable as those of the gentlemen of Port-Royal, since they were treated much after the same manner. But now we are talking of books of polite literature," says I, "pray inform me in what manner you instruct your pupils in them?" "As this study," replied the Jesuit, "is not as dangerous as that of philosophy, we explain to them the Greek and Roman authors: And, at the same time, endeavour to give them a better relish for the poets than for the historians and orators." "Wherefore," replied I, do you act in this manner?" "This," continued



continued he, " is likewise of use to our society and the Christian religion. A man who at his leaving college, spends the remainder of his life in reading the works of Horace, Virgil, Catullus, Ovid, Juvenal, &c. is no ways in danger of becoming a heretic; nor to leave the pleasing entertainments those poets give, to peruse authors of a dangerous and seducing kind. If, after having studied the Latin poets, they apply themselves to those among the French, as Corneille, Racine, la Fontaine, Molliere, and an hundred more, these will not make them enemies either to our society, or to the court of Rome. But should he delight in studying the historians, after having perused Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Salust, &c. he then will not fail to read Thuanus, d' Aubigne, Mezerai, Puffendorff, Bayle, Rapin Thoyras, &c. and, in this case, to what dangers will he not be exposed? What impressions may he not receive from the perusal of such dangerous writers? The history written by Thuanus is, singly, capable of inspiring a horror for the Jesuits: and to root out, in the most prejudiced mind, the prepossessions imbibed during ten years spent in our colleges. It is true, indeed, that to obviate this inconvenience as much as possible our society has writ a great number of books, in which truth is displayed in its utmost lustre. But then, the Jansenists on the one hand, and the Protestants on the other; and, what is worse, a great number of Molinists, who call themselves faithful royalists, have inveighed so much against the books in question, that they have quite ruined the credit of them, except with regard to those devout persons whom we direct, and to whom we prescribe the perusal of them, as an antidote against the slanders of our enemies. For things are carried to so great a height in this particular, that, in the opinion of many persons, Maimbourg and Impostor, Jouvenci and Liar, are synonymous terms." "I will own, reverend father," says I to the Jesuit, "that I meet with many persons who are of the same opinion. But were they not in the right? And Maimbourg."—"Maimbourg," replied

replied the Jesuit, is vastly accurate; and people begin to lay aside the disadvantageous opinion they had entertained of him. It is an undoubted fact, that the falsities with which that writer has been so strongly charged, ought justly to be laid to the charge of his adversaries. Two hundred years hence his authority will no doubt be of great weight, and it then will be seen what use our society will make of his works."

Observing, friend Isaac, that the Jesuit took fire, and defended with great zeal all the historians of the society, I did not think it proper to insist any longer on the little credit that ought to be given to them. I only asked, what could be the reason why the Jesuits did not endeavour to give their pupils an advantageous idea of Tully, and the rest of the orators? "We have taken notice," said he, "that all in general called gentlemen of the long robe, presidents, counsellors, advocates, &c. have an utter disinclination to our society. The study of eloquence generally leads a man to the bar; and, the instant he has formed a resolution to devote himself to it, he entertains a thousand whimsies, to which he gives the odious name of Privileges of the Clergy, and Liberties of the Gallican Church; and devotes himself entirely to raise the glory of the parliaments, the mortal enemies to the society and court of Rome. For this reason we would not permit our pupils to read Cicero's works, if we were not absolutely forced to it. To lessen the credit of them as much as lies in our power, we bestow the highest encomiums on certain oratorical discourses, written by some of the fathers of our society, which, having nothing in common with the eloquence of the bar, resemble very much the bright fallies of the Italian poets." "You are always harping upon poetry," replied I to the Jesuit; "for which reason I do not wonder that your pupils should be so fond of the stage, upon which they are to represent your tragedies. I even conceive that you are very much in the right to employ them in that manner: For it is certain that, so long as they shall set them-

themselves up for players, they will never take it into their heads to write any books which may prejudice your society."

What idea wilt thou entertain, dear Isaac, of a set of people, among whom such persons as are designed for the chief employments of the state, after spending ten years at school, have acquired no other talent in it, but the trifling one of being able to declaim some tragic scene? What a wise nation must that be, in which the magistrate is educated after the same manner as the player and tumbler? where all the knowledge that a nobleman has of the liberties of his country, consists in what he had learned from the reading of Corneille; where the gentleman and considerable tradesman knows no more of history than what he is taught from the compilations of Mariana, and some other historian among the Jesuits; where the studious man forms his library of the orations of Poree the Jesuit, father du Perceau's Poems; and, what is worse, of the Trevoux Journals! What glory may not such a nation hope to acquire, in a very short time, by such aids as the above-mentioned? To be serious, worthy Isaac, I should pity the French very much, if the prejudices which they imbibe in the colleges of the Jesuits were not balanced by the good education which are bestowed on great numbers of persons in other colleges, directed by preceptors of the finest abilities.

Farewel, dear Isaac, live contented and happy; and expect me shortly.

## LETTER CXCIV.

Monceca makes a visit with the chevalier de Maisin to a French count.—A description of the count's behaviour and manner of life.

AARON MONCECA TO ISAAC ONIS.

Paris.—

I Spent a whole day, dear Isaac, without employing a single moment in any thing useful: I could almost be tempted to say, that I passed a day without thinking, or perceiving that I was informed with a soul capable of reflecting.

Chevalier de Maisin proposed to me, last week, for us to go and dine with a nobleman, a friend of his. "He is a very good natured man, says he, he loves mirth and good cheer. His manner of thinking indeed, does not agree very well with yours; but we do not always meet with wise men and philosophers. A man should suit himself as well as he can to all sorts of characters, and make the best advantage of them possible. Act as I do; I endeavour to reap advantage by my acquaintance with all men. Something useful may be found in every one of them. A coxcomb is sometimes possessed of virtues unknown to many of the literati." Seduced by these specious words, I let him take me to the young nobleman's in question. It was half an hour after one when we got there. "Is the count up?" says chevalier de Maisin. "He is not," replied a valet-de-chambre, who carried us into his master's apartment. We found him in bed; and his chamber would have been quite dark, had it not been for a few rays of light that darted through the shutters. Surprized at the gloom, I naturally imagined that the person who was in bed at such an hour was sick; and accordingly was going to step back, when a weak, effeminate voice, which could scarce pierce through the curtains broke into the following sounds. "Is it you, dear

chevalier?



chevalier? said he. I went to bed at five this morning; we drank like fishes. Should I go on in this way, it will be impossible for me to hold it long."... "You are a debauchee, replied the chevalier; you ruin your health, and will one day regret your having been so prodigal of it."—"What a poor creature you are, chevalier? replied the count. I do not set up for a philosopher, as you do. I make use of life, and so let what will happen. The new actress, who performs the part of Egle, supped with us last night. By my life, she's an enchanting creature and takes off her glass of champaign like any jovial Bacchanal. We certainly have played the public a very scurvy trick, for I'm mistaken if she will not be hoarse to night. But we must go to the Opera and clap her: I really shall be very sorry should our last night's debauch do her the least prejudice."

During all this discourse, the curtains continued undrawn. The chevalier had not yet spoke to his friend about me; and finding he did not offer to get up, "I bring you says he, a person for whom I have the greatest love and esteem, and therefore must bring you acquainted."—"Who is that adorable person, replied the count, for whom I already feel the strongest sensations of tenderness? where is he? let me embrace him!" Saying these words, the pert coxcomb threw the curtains open; and, half haked, flung himself out of bed upon the floor.--- "Come hither, dear sir, says he to me, let me assure you that no person in the world can be more your servant than I am."--- Saying these words, he seemed to be seized with a violent fit of the vapours, when ringing for his servants, two valet-de-chambres came up immediately, one with his night-gown, and the other with his slippers. The instant he had taken them, he flew to me with open arms, hugged me five or six times, and almost took my breath away. "I am infinitely obliged, says he, to the chevalier, for procuring me the pleasure of your acquaintance. Have you been long in Paris?"--- "I came, says I to him, from England."—"So, ho, continued the Fop; you are

are an Englishman, I warrant you. Ods my life, your countrymen are men of deep thought. I am told that you have a great many genius's among you: But Burgundy and Champaign are vastly dear in England. It is my opinion that they lose their strength in crossing the sea. Are your tippling houses in the villages round London as gay and smiling as those about Paris?" — "I am not an Englishman, replied I, I was born in Constantinople." — "In Constantinople, says the Fop, in Constantinople, say you? It is a most delightful city. I am told that the women there are exquisitely beautiful. There are Circassians in that city, whose charms would eclipse those of our opera songsters. How many mistresses has the Grand Signior in his seraglio?" "That, replies I, no body can tell but the chief black Eunuchs. — "Eunuchs says the count; those wretches are so many barbarous goalers to the poor women. — The Grand Signior must be a tyrannical sort of a master! He must have things enough to amuse him, or I am hugely mistaken. Yet it is my opinion, that, spite of the great number of his she-favourites, he must sometimes be quite tired with himself. He has no idea of what we call delicate parties of pleasure, charming suppers, and engaging company. He is for ever shut up in his seraglio with his fair ones, like a cock with his hens. When he sups with any of his darling mistresses, do they enliven the entertainment with a song? I fancy not. They are as melancholy together as a couple of watch-tapers. The Ottoman emperor eats as soberly with his sultana, as the tradesman of St. Dennis-street does with his wife."

"It is very difficult, says I, to know any thing transacted in the seraglio. The most indifferent actions are there concealed under the veil of secrecy and discretion. It is even dangerous to pry into the intrigues carrying on there, such a curiosity being often punished with the utmost rigour." — "It is different, says the count, in France. In that country a person may, without running any danger, enquire into the

intrigues of the court. If you please, I'll give you a list of all those carried on in it ever since the beginning of this year. You shall take this list to Constantinople; and be assured, that it will include a great number of curious particulars."—"What are you thinking of, dear count, interrupted chevalier de Maisin with a smile: Before this gentleman reaches his native country, your list would be as useless as last year's almanack; and you might have made ten new ones by that time." "Ods heart, says my coachman, to make such a list of use, it ought to be renewed twice or thrice a week, in the same manner as a news-paper."

During all this tittle-tattle, two valets-de-chambre were dressing the count; the one was putting on his stockings, the other buckling his shoes; and I was surprized that a man, to whom providence had indulged the use of all his limbs, should suffer himself to be dressed as though he were a doll. I imagined that I saw a gigantic doll, which a painter was cloathing in a French dress. "Was this For, says I to myself, afflicted with the palsy, he would think himself very unhappy, and would be for ever bemoaning himself, for being denied the use of his limbs; and yet he acts in the very same manner as if he was deprived of them. It must be confessed that grandeur and state, which consist in not making use of one's hands, is as ridiculous as that which endeavours to create a contempt for the sciences. In order for a person to assume the behaviour of a nobleman, he must make but a half use of his limbs and of his genius."

My astonishment was soon interrupted by the orders which the count gave for serving up dinner. They were punctually obeyed, so that a moment after we sat down at table, there was a most elegant entertainment, and every dish was finely dressed; and yet he did not like any of them. One was too insipid and another too high seasoned: And as he was for ever asking my opinion about them. I praised every one, but my applause was ascribed to civility.

short

short, among these various ragouts, there was one that pleased the count. It was really finely tasted; but it was composed of fifty sorts of viands of different kinds, and was a mortal poison, but exquisite to the palate. Is it possible, says I to myself, that a man should pay so high a price for dishes that are so prejudicial to his health; and despise all such as are dressed in so plain a manner as cannot hurt it. The count did all that lay in his power to make me eat as heartily as himself of that ragout. "Eat heartily of this, said he to me every moment; this is the only tolerable dish that has been served up. I see plainly, continued he, that you seldom eat dinners. You keep your appetite for supper. This is acting like a man of sense. Day light is impertinent at meals; and it is only by the light of wax-tapers that one can taste that delicious joy which forms the very soul of entertainments. But you shall drink a glass or two of Champaign, after which we will move off to the play: And then go and sup with the new actresses. I have ordered, the moment the opera is done, such an entertainment to be sent to her lodgings as may make amends for our bad dinner."

I would gladly, dear Isaac, have avoided the proposal which the count made me, but unhappily I was the victim to French politeness. I was forced, spite of himself, to run the hazard of injuring my health; and to follow, a whole day, a way of life entirely different from that I was used to. I was now got to the play-house, with my fop and chevalier de Maifin. I was going into a box, but the former seizing me by the hand, asked me with an air of surprise, whither I intended to go? "I am going, replied I, to get into some place where I may hear the play without being interrupted." — "What are you thinking of replied the count? We are to have Mithridates; it is an old Tragedy that has been played these fifty years. Forrid! It is like one of the pieces acted in Henry the fourth's days. Come into the green-room; we'll chat with the girls." I again obey'd my coxcomb, though with



great reluctance. The moment we came into the green-room he flew to the actress who was to play the part of Monimia. She was dressed for the stage; and, according to custom, was come to beg some compliments, and lavish away a few glances. "So, lovely Gauffin, says he to her, we shall have the pleasure of hearing you to night. The town would be very unjust to regret poor la Couvreur; you are worth an hundred such actresses. This I declare publickly every day; and have the pleasure to find that all persons of taste are of my opinion." The actress, charmed with these words, thanked the count; and repaid his compliments by two or three glances, to the power of which he was no ways insensible. He shrugged up his shoulders, smiled, took two or three pinches of snuff, turned his head, kissed the actress's hand, cut a caper, spoke two or three words, and all this in so short a time, that none but a fop could run through so much in so few minutes. In the mean time the actress was forced to go and play her part. Scarce was she got out of the green-room, when the count, coming up to me, spoke thus with a very serious air, and a most charitable tone of voice; "It is good to encourage young beginners. That poor girl is a very indifferent actress, and is no more like la Couvreur than—. The stage has had an irretrievable loss. And indeed, ever since that time, I have always been fond of the opera, so that I come here very seldom. But now I am talking of the opera, it is time for us to go thither. I want to hear the duet in the fifth act. Come, let us fly thither," As my fop warbled these last words, he ran with such speed that I could scarce overtake him; and when we were got into the street, he was still singing. I imagined he would leave off when we were got into the coach; but he went on, and had not left off when we arrived at the opera-house. "What act are they in? says he to the box-keeper,—In the third sir, replied he. In the third, says he, zoons, in the third! what a confounded long time must we wait before we hear the duet. Come,

Come, come away to the green-room." And now, to engage me to follow him, he began to sing (as he walked, or rather danced ;)

" In this blest place let's seek for peace ;  
The smiles and sports will us attend.  
Who seek for joys, will find increase  
Of joys refin'd that know no end.

" My dear Constantinopolitan, says he, squeezing my hand,

" 'Tis here felicity supreme resides ;  
Here pleasures flow in never-ceasing tides.

" Here a man, without being the Grand Signior, may, for ten pistoles, chuse any beauty whom he has a mind to distinguish by throwing her the handkerchief. You cannot conceive how advantageous the opera is, for those who delight in sprightly, easy pleasure." Saying these words, he found himself, unexpectedly, in the midst of twelve actresses, when a fresh gaiety spread immediately over his whole countenance. He did not now assume the tender air which he had put on in the play-house, but discovered in every part of him, the frolicsome, wanton, hair-brain'd debauchee—" How goes it my girl, says he to one of those female singers. How long is it since you saw the marquiss? I fancy he's a rover: Will you sup with us this evening? Depend upon it he will not be jealous. Be assured that nothing immodest will be offered. Nothing but Champagne flows among us; nothing more, upon my honour. I grow more prudent every day, and, I really believe, more devout." He did not wait for any answer to these words, but flew to another singer. " Are you there charming Germain, says he with an air of surprise. I was assured that you had taken a trip to England. To what strange lengths will slander go, and how much is virtue sometimes exposed! And, indeed, I was surprized that the

wife St. German, the chaste St. Germain, should be so imprudent as to follow to London a hair-brain'd fellow, who possibly would not have carried her thither, but have dropt her by the way. This would have been uncharitable. There is no great harm in chousing the English of their guineas when they are in Paris; but surely they ought to escape being duped in their own country."

My fopling seemed very much inclined to carry on his jokes; and would not have left off so soon, had not the actress at whose lodgings he was to sup, come into the green-room. He flew to her instantly. "Lovely Egle, says he, I am come to clap you. You are the delight of all who see and hear you. They are enchanted with your voice, and inflamed by your eyes.——I have ordered a large quantity of Champagne. I'll take you in my berlin as soon as the opera is over." The female singer accepted the count's offer with pleasure; and the moment she had done her part upon the stage, the count, the fair-one, chevalier de Maifin and myself, all set out in order to go to supper. The first conversation which passed at table, turned upon operas and music; but it was soon succeeded by others of a different strain; and the intrigues of the actresses and singers were the only topic. I heard the stories of ten gallants who had been ruined, of thirty who had been betrayed, of forty who had been so weak as to imagine their mistresses had really loved them; and of fifty who had been rejected with scorn because their circumstances were not flourishing enough.

After they had gone through the chronicle of intrigues, a proposal was made for a song. I was delighted with the motion; and accordingly flattered myself that I should hear some of those admirable airs which Bacchus and the muses dictated to excellent poets: but my joy was not long lived; for instead of hearing songs in the taste of those of Anacreon, of Sappho, of Voiture, of madam des Houlieres, and of Coulanges, my ears were stunned with a flood of low ballads, in the taste of Chick-

ens and Asparagus, wipe your nose, &c. "These are fine songs, says the count to me, over a glass. Elegant people don't love your Lully's long songs, in two or three parts; and they now are thought as obsolete as my great-grandmother. Formerly an entertainment always used to end with songs in honour of Cupid, Bacchus, Iris, and Phillis: But thanks to the good taste that prevails, all that old stuff is thrown out of doors. Persons of good breeding now declare universally, with the excellent author of Hurlothrumbo, in favour of All alive and merry.

"Open, open quick the door,  
Nymph, with charms and endless store.  
'Tis, my fair-one, twelve at night;  
Show thine eyes as diamonds bright.  
Waiter, bring Beuf-a-la-mode;  
Bring the fare, a mighty load:  
Let the ham superior shine;  
Ham gives gusto to the wine \*."

Judge, dear Isaac, of the astonishment I was in. Do you call this, says I, a polite supper? What is the taste of the entertainment of porters and common soldiers, since persons of quality behave as they used to do? Were such amiable debauchees as St. Evremont and Chapelle to return again into the world, it is my opinion that they would chuse to turn anchorites rather than follow the present mode. "Our feasts," would they say, "were a school for polishing the mind; but those of the present age are calculated only for cramming."

Farewel, good Isaac; may thy life be one continual series of prosperity; and form to thyself a just idea of the trifling life led by fops and coxcombs.

\* All the fops used to sing, and still continue to sing, this ridiculous and impertinent song.



## LETTER CXCIV.

Customs and manners of the knights of Malta, described.—They bear a mortal hatred to the Jews.—An account of the origin of the order of Malta, and its laws—The Maltese of great service to all Christian powers, on account of their naval force.

JACOB BRITO TO AARON MONCECA.

Malta.—

**I** Have been, dear Monceca, these four or five days in Malta; and I intend to leave it as soon as possible, in order to sail for Constantinople; the captain whom I intend to embark with waiting only for a fair wind. I spend the little time I have to stay in this city, in enquiring into the manners and customs of the knights.

They bear a mortal enmity to all persons of our faith. A man who is of Jewish extraction is never admitted into their island. Their aversion does not stop here. Should a gentleman, whose ancestors were formerly of their order, marry a woman who is related to, or barely descended from a Jewish family, though she were as zealous a Nazarene as St. Ursula or St. Aldegonda, her children would never be allowed to set their feet in Malta. Their names are writ in a book called the Golden Book. Farther, the instant a family becomes Jewish by marriage; or that one who is so obtains letters patent of nobility, and such titles as may afterwards qualify them to be admitted into Malta, it is inserted in the register of rejected persons, to prevent any inconveniences which might otherwise arise from their being forgot during a long course of years. In the language of the country, such families as spring from Jewish ancestors are called Jews from the Stem; and those who are so by marriage, Jews from the Venter. There are a great number of ancient houses in several provinces of France, Spain and Portugal, which though they have been Nazarene during several ages, will yet be never allowed

allowed to enter among the knights of Malta, because their names are writ in the Golden Book.

The hatred which the knights bear to those of our faith, arose from the treachery of a Jew, who occasioned the taking of the island of Rhodes. They once possessed, as thou knowest, this island; but lost it in the reign of Solyman the magnificent, who possessed himself of it. They were less successful against that emperor than against Mahomed II. This dreadful conqueror, whose arms had been always irresistible, attacked Rhodes to no purpose. In 1480 he invaded that island with a formidable army, under the command of Paleologus the bashaw. The fleet appointed to carry over this army consisted of one hundred and sixty sail, exclusive of those appointed to carry the baggage, &c. Peter d' Aubuffon grand-master, or chief knight of Rhodes, defeated all this force; and defended Rhodes with so much valour and prudence, that after losing the most considerable part of his army, Paleologus the bashaw was obliged to draw off his troops. However, the ill success which Mahommed II. met with, did not intimidate Solyman, who laid siege to that city in 1522. The knights calling to mind the noble defence which their ancestors had made, and animated by Philip Villiers de l'Isle Adam, grand-master, resisted, with the utmost bravery, the attacks of the enemy. However, their courage did not avail, occasioned by the treason of Andrew Amarat, a Portugeze, and chancellor of the order. This man bore a mortal hatred to the grand-master, from the supposition that the last mentioned had been raised to the highest employment of the order, to his prejudice. To revenge himself of his particular enemy, and of all the knights who had been preferred before him, he informed the Jews, by means of a Jewish physician, of the state of the place, and the debates of the council, in which he, by his employment, had a seat. The treason having been discovered, the criminals were punished; however, the advice he had given from time to time was no less

less fatal to the knights, they being forced to give up the city, after making one of the noblest defences we read of in history.

This, dear Monceca, is the reason why the knights of Malta have the Jews in such detestation; and of the cruel decrees they made, for excluding eternally from their island all who might bear the least relation to them. It is surprizing that, for the crime committed by a particular person, they should have struck at a considerable number of noble and antient families, who are strongly branded by this exclusion. However, the Jews are not punished by this means, but the Nazarenes, or rather those who forsake the Jewish religion. Had a method been sought for, in Europe, still to keep, in the Jewish principles, all such rich families as might have been influenced by ambition, a more infallible way could not have been found, than that of stigmatizing, in this manner, all Nazarenes who sprung from Israelites.

It was after the taking of Jerusalem by the Turks, that the knights, then called of St. John of Jerusalem, had possessed themselves of the island of Rhodes, by which name they then were called. Upon their being obliged to quit it, Charles V. gave them Malta for the place of their abode, where they fortified themselves in a short time, in such a manner that they were able to resist the attacks of their enemies. It was extremely necessary for them to use all the precautions imaginable; for Solyman, encouraged by the taking of Rhodes, formed a design to besiege Malta. In 1566, Mustapha, bashaw of Buda, made a descent upon it; but after having spent four months there, and lost upwards of twenty thousand men, he drew off his troops. The grand signiors ever since that time have laid aside all thoughts of besieging Malta; and indeed it is morally impossible for them ever to take it.

The order of Malta, now so flourishing and renowned among all the Nazarenes, rose from a very inconsiderable beginning. Its glory resembles pretty much that of the ancient Romans; it rising on a sud-

den from the lowest origin. The founder of Rome was a young man brought up among shepherds, who got together some banditti and vagabonds, at whose head he set himself, and the founder of the knights of Malta was the humble inhabitant of Martegues, a little town in Provence, and his name John Baptist Gerard. He was the director of an hospital which the Nazarenes had founded in Jerusalem, before Godfrey of Bouillon had possessed himself of it, and been crowned there. When the Turks had been drove from it, this prince hearing of Gerard's humanity and charity, and the care which the persons who were under him had taken of the Nazarenes, at the time that the Egyptian Caliphs were sovereigns of Judea, thought it would be equally glorious and pious in him to assist those who spent their lives in such good works. He accordingly was extremely munificent to them, gave them the name of Hospitallers; and ordered them to wear black cloathes, on which was a white cross, with eight points, such as are now worn by the knights of Malta. These hospitallers afterwards made the three vows common to the friars in general; and engaged themselves by a fourth, to receive, to entertain, and defend all such Nazarene pilgrims as should visit Jerusalem. From that time they began to come military; and were often obliged to fight for the security of the roads, and that of pious travellers. A great many persons of distinction imagined that they might enter into the order of knights hospitallers, their profession being very honourable; so that, by insensible degrees, they found themselves metamorphosed into knights. After that the Nazarenes had been drove out of Jerusalem by the Turks, they retired first to Acre, and afterwards to the kingdom of Cyprus, where an asylum was allowed them by Guy of Lusignan, the king of the island. But now finding themselves strong enough to attempt some mighty action, and endeavouring to settle themselves in a place of which they might enjoy the sovereignty, they attacked the Saracens in the island of Rhodes; drove them from it; and continued



tinued there in a flourishing condition, till they were forced to abandon it to Mahommed II. and retire to Malta.

During a long course of years, all persons desirous of being admitted into the order, must exhibit such proofs of their nobility as are required by the statutes. These proofs consist in the sixteen quarters; and are the same with those exhibited by the monarchs of France, with regard to the blue ribbon. When it is found, in the enquiry into a candidate's pedigree, that some of his ancestors had lessened themselves, by their marrying women of inferior families, such a candidate may, if he has got friends among the knights, obtain a brief from the pope, or the general chapter. A dispensation is sometimes allowed with regard to defects on the mother's side; but there must not be the least blot or imperfection in the male and direct line. Wherever this is found, the candidate is rejected, which has happened very frequently; and here follows what historians relate concerning the manner of the admission of the knights in question. "The proofs of their nobility are made by records, contracts, witnesses, epitaphs, and other monuments. The commissioners also make an enquiry, whether the parents of the candidate have not derogated from their nobility by trade or banking: On which occasion there is an exemption for the cities of Genoa, Florence, Sienna, and Lucca, the inhabitants of which no ways derogate by being merchants. After that the proofs have been made, the commissioners who were employed for that purpose, present the result of their enquiries to the chapter; where, if they are found valid, they are transmitted to Malta, under the great-prior's seal. The candidate being arrived in the island, his proofs or titles are examined in the tongue or nation to which the great-prior to whom he was presented, belongs; and if they are approved, he is received into the order of knighthood; and his antiquity is admitted from that day, provided he pays the passage, that is, two hundred and fifty gold crowns. The proofs are sometimes rejected in  
Malta.

Malta. In this case, the sum that had been given used formerly to be returned; but it was lately decreed by new ordinances, that it should remain in the treasury\*."

This last ordinance, dear Monceca, appears unjust to me. Any society, who refuse to admit a person among them, ought not to accept of his money. Perhaps the only reason why the knights act in this manner, is, to make the candidates more circum-spect; and to oppose a barrier to any attempts of the particular chapters of the provinces, where the first proofs are made. In fire, though it were true, that all the statutes of the Malteze should not be equally perfect, it must yet be confessed, that few nations are of greater service to all Europe. Was it not for them, the Mediterranean would be filled with pirates; and it cannot be denied but that they secure the trade of all nations. Though I am a Jew, friend Monceca, and consequently contemned and hated in the most violent degree, by the knights of Malta, I yet cannot forbear doing justice to their valour; and to own, that they are of service to all Nazarene traders, of what religion soever. The English, for ever ready to condemn any thing in which they have no share, seem to condemn the Malteze; but one may easily see that pride and vanity, vices inherent in that people, determine their judgments. I would ask them, whether they are always at peace with the Sallee men, the Algerines, the Tunisiens and Tripolitans? Should they answer in the negative, they must confess, that it is happy for them that there are a considerable number of gallics and men of war, which cost them nothing, and which secure the passage to all such vessels as sail to Constantinople, or any part of the Levant. Should they assert, on the contrary, that the African Turks will never dare to engage in war with them; I can assure them, that the best argument they have for their opinion consists in the maritime forces they

\* Morari; under the word Malta.

are now possessed of. But may not these forces be one day employed in different places? It is but very lately that they were upon the point of opposing those of France and Spain. Had the Algerines then declared war against them, would the English have had the means, the leisure, the opportunity to send a fleet before Algiers? The Dutch, the rivals of the English with respect to the empire of the sea, but freer and more sincere than they, own ingenuously that the knights of Malta are very serviceable; a truth they themselves daily experience. How many times have the Algerines broke their word with them? Are they not actually at war with the Saltee men? Their vessels which trade in Egypt, and in all parts of the Archipelago, have a secure harbour in Malta, to put into; and where they may be guarded from the Corsairs, who are awed by the Malteze fleet. To pretend, dear Monceca, that the knights are not of service to all the traders in Europe, is asserting, that in such forests as are most infested by highway-men, it is of no signification for the government to post a certain number of people to scare them; and, by that means, to clear the roads of them.

If the merchants are obliged to the Malteze, all persons, of what country soever, who love the polite arts, are no less obliged to them, their island being a bulwark, which secures Italy from the enterprizes of the Turks. The design of Charles V. in giving the knights, Malta, was to secure the tranquility of that island, as well as that of his kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. The English, who naturally love the polite arts, and who have carried the improvement of the sciences to so exalted a pitch, ought, though at so great a distance from Italy, to use their endeavours with regard to its preservation; and to call to mind, that it was the mother of the noble arts, which it poured from its bosom over all Europe; and that it still possesses a numberless multitude of beauties and wonders, which ought to be defended, protected and preserved, by all who think it glorious to speak in a manner different from the vulgar.

Though

Though I am a Jew, and brought up in the hatred of the Nazarene principles, I yet would defend, if it lay in my power, St. Peter's church against the attacks of the Turks. "How! would I say to myself, shall the finest edifice in the world, an edifice that contains the works of the greatest men, be destroyed by the fury of a barbarous people! Although the Deity forbids me to engage in the quarrels of the infidels, it yet does not command me to approve of the demolition of the noblest monuments, such as are the greatest honour to human nature. It is not the work of Raphael, as a Nazarene, which I defend; but the work of Raphael, as a man, and a man superior to all the rest in his art. If the arts and sciences are of all countries and all religions, those who cultivate, who love and honour them, are all brethren."

Fare thee well, dear Monceca, live contented and happy; and let not the prejudices of thy native country or religion prevent thy applauding whatever is praise-worthy.

## LETTER CXCVI.

The false and ridiculous Ideas which the French affix to the word **TASTE**, justly censured. — Quotations from some of their writers who set up for Directors of Taste.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

Paris. —

**T**HE French, dear Isaac, have a word in their language, which authorizes the greatest impertinences; gives one a right to condemn such things as are most approved, and brings those who make use of them into vogue. Thou wilt easily suppose that this word must be often in the mouth of fops and coxcombs; and indeed they employ it on all occasions; and Taste (for this is the mighty word) is generally introduced in conversations, however

F f 2

ridiculous



ridiculous they may be. If a man tires all who hear the account he gives of his adventures, he does this to imitate persons of Taste. If another speaks in incoherent expressions; if he muses, whistles or sings, it is still Taste that requires him to behave in that manner. If a nobleman crowds his cabinet with pictures, the figures of which do not discover either dignity in the composition, or comeliness in the drawing; and prefers them to the compositions of Raphael and Titian, it is still Taste that does all this. Formerly ignorant persons used to esteem painting without understanding the art: But it is otherwise in this age: Taste bids us prefer the knick knacks of Watteau and Lancret to the noble compositions of Carache and Tintoret. If a fop contemns the arts and sciences, and those who cultivate them; if he condemns, without having ever read them, all the Greek and Latin authors, it is Taste makes him pronounce so solid a decision: It is that which informs him, without study or care, that all men, during two thousand years, were fools, for esteeming a set of pedants, or creatures who wrote nothing but trifles.

Taste supposes true wit to consist in a certain order of the words, which present nothing except sounds. But then these sounds are so soft, these words put together in so singular and extraordinary a manner, that a writer must have a particular talent to excel in that art. Those who have attained to perfection in this particular, despise the great orators of Greece and Rome; and consider them only as persons of heavy parts, who indeed offered reasons that were not quite intolerable; but then, that their expressions were so extremely low and vulgar, that it would have been impossible for their contemporaries to understand them.

But fops and coxcombs are not the only persons who think and express themselves in so judicious a manner. A great number of writers are also of this opinion; and a Look was lately published in this country, in which it is asserted, that Cicero is filled

with

with bombast expressions and coarse jokes; that he frequently offers nothing but low, trifling images to his readers; and that had there been any persons of Taste in the senate, he would have found but few panegyrists. His auditors had less Taste than he. Cato was a Pedant, and Hortensius a meer Trifler. These two words friend Isaac, are employed by this writer, who doubtless is one of the men who possesses, in the highest degree, that Taste, to which we are indebted for the knowledge of so many excellent things. In the very title of his book, he informs his readers of the benefits they may expect to meet with from his work; he entitling it, *An Essay Historical and Critical, on Taste\**; that is, in the modern language, *A dissertation in which it is proved, by history and philosophy, that the ancients were a parcel of ignorant creatures; that foreign nations have not common sense; and that true wit is confined to Paris, where only true taste is found.*

Thou possibly may'st imagine, dear Isaac, that interpreting the title above-mentioned in this manner, I ascribe to the author what he himself never wrote. But I will assure thee it is otherwise, I expressing only in few words what he has said very much at large. Is not France vastly happy, in giving birth to children who are so zealous for its glory? Thrice propitious nation! in producing genius's whose instructions are so just and useful? To what purpose are Locke and Leibnitz? They are only a tasteless set of authors, who are able to present their countrymen with notions as gross and as useless to England, as those of Cicero to ancient Rome. But a writer, such as abbe Cartaud de la Villate, is a hero in the republic of letters, born to improve the Taste of all persons to whom nature has denied it.

To wave all pleasantry, good Isaac, thou can'st not conceive the height to which some French authors carry their folly and extravagance. They seem

resolved, not only totally to destroy the sciences in their respective countries, but likewise to make their countrymen contemptible in the eyes of Europe, from the judgment that must necessarily be formed of those who are so simple and ignorant as to approve of the books which are daily printed in Paris. Men of true learning content themselves with despising such writers, without giving themselves the trouble to ridicule them strongly. However, they are greatly in the wrong: For many people look upon their silence as their acquiescing with the maxims inserted in those bad books; and that persons of little or no genius, such as set up for the mode, and are fond of singular opinions, adopt the sentiments of those pitiful scribblers, and do infinite prejudice, not only to the republic of letters, but even to all the French, who are thought to be upon the point of reverting to a barbarity like that of the Goths and Vandals.

And indeed, what will foreigners think, when they peruse most of the books published in this age? They are but so many novels, the best of which are fit only to entertain a few fops, and silly women. When these romances are well writ, and in a simple and natural stile; such, in a word, as suits pieces of this kind, we ought not to inveigh against them for being so very numerous, since, if they do no great good, they do no great harm. But may we not exclaim in the most severe terms against such as seem written in no other view but to corrupt and spoil the French tongue; to accustom persons to employ fustian expressions; to teach them to be unintelligible to their readers; in fine, to enjoin them to present nothing to the mind but an empty parcel of words, the connection of which is amazing; and the enquiring after the meaning of which gives as much trouble, as a commentator has to explain some difficult passages in an author who wrote two or three thousand years before him? It is to apologize for, and even defend, works as pernicious as these, that we see pieces daily published like those of abbe

Cartaud

Cartaud, writers, who, to give the greater currency to nonsense, and the false thoughts of these pretended persons of Taste, insolently condemn and inveigh against ancient authors in general, and all such as have formed themselves upon their models. Perhaps Cicero, Virgil, Homer, Demosthenes, &c. could never have been blamed in these latter ages, had not Des Marets, Perrault, La Motte, and such like, been approved. Not but these authors had some genius, and even merit; and deserved praise on many accounts. But then, in doing justice to them on the one hand, it would have been necessary, on the other, to oppose the evil which they attempted to introduce into the republic of letters. We then should not have been pestered with that posse of bad writers, who, imitating only the singularities in the style and manner of thinking of Fontenelle and La Motte, and not having genius enough to imitate such things as are just and praise-worthy, entirely destroy polite literature.

Is it possible, for instance, for a writer to go to a more ridiculous excess in this respect than abbe Cartaud de la Villatte has done? This author, who sets up for one of the Directors of Taste; declares that Herodotus's diction is like that of a drunken man; that Thucydides has several essential errors; that the odes of Horace have not a certain roundness which ought to be in a well connected piece; compares the genius of the Italians to the capers of an opera-dancer; and, indeed, the words he employs are truly worthy of that comparison. They are as follow, dear Isaac, and will give thee an idea of the style and manner of writing of the adversaries of the ancients. "Nature is able to raise itself to any tone or pitch, when properly exercised and regulated in its infancy. Nevertheless it sometimes anticipates education. It formed the genius of the Italians for Sallies and Cascades, as it formed mademoiselle Camargo for high dances. They see a shining thought break through the midst of the horrors of despair, as we see in the night-time, an ignis fatuus on a sea that



is going to be very stormy\*." It must be owned, dear Isaac, that a man, who writes with so refined an air, has reason to treat Cicero, as an unpolished and insipid writer. Would this Roman have been so very witty as to compare nature to a harpsicord? Would he have said, that she can raise herself to any tone or pitch? Would he have found out the secret to discover an affinity between the sallies of the Italians, and the high dances of Camargo? Would he have hit upon so delicate an expression as that of Cascade? Can any expression be in a finer taste than that of Cascades of the mind? What strange images does this offer to the imagination? Methinks I see all the good sense of the poor Italians precipitate itself, like the waters of a torrent, over craggy rocks; and I perceive, whilst I am writing this, that the strength of this expression is so great that it almost raises me above myself; and suggests to me some thoughts worthy the fustian and nonsense of the Directors of Taste. What person could read, without emotion, the last phrase I quoted to thee: "They see a shining thought break through the midst of the horrors of despair, as we see, in the night time, an ignis fatuus on a sea that is going to be very stormy?" It would be impossible for a writer to express himself with greater force and energy. "The horrors of despair." Here we have the great, the horrible, the frightful: and, by one of those touches reserved for good taste, this great, this horrible, this dreadful, are placed along with the sprightly and the wanton. "They see a shining thought break." This is the sprightly; "through the midst of the horrors of despair;" here we have the dreadful. Was it not with reason that a modern author said, that it very frequently happens in the compositions of the writers of this age, that two words are greatly surprized to see themselves coupled together? This had never happened to them ever since they had been invented; and they never expect to meet together more.

\* *Essay sur le Gout*, pag. 248.

Another

Another unhappy circumstance in this passage is, the author has there fallen into a fault with which the Directors of Taste have strongly reproached Homer. Thou knowest very well that Perrault has frequently exclaimed against the comparisons used by the poets just mentioned, and which he calls Long-tail'd Comparisons; and that of the genius of the Italians with an *ignis fatuus* "on a sea that is going to be very stormy," seems to me not to be short-tailed, to employ the technical term. It is true indeed that Homer, as a poet, ought to be pardoned, for having endeavoured to fill his book with pleasing images which are a great ornament to it: But this is very naturally employed by authors who write on history and philosophy. Abbe Cartaud, according to the maxims of Taste, might introduce, in his Historical and Philosophical Essay, such flowers as Homer ought not to have brought into a poem. It even was just in him to reject the most judicious comparisons of the ancients, and to employ those of an extraordinary kind, as the following, which I shall copy here word for word; "The verses of Livius Andronicus are like statues chopp'd from a rough rock, covered with moss." Thucydides and Xenophon had not genius and sense enough to present, to their readers, thoughts, the turn of which is so very new. Nothing but Taste can discover a resemblance between "verses and statues chopp'd out of a rough rock covered with moss."

Are not persons, whose turn of thought is so very refined and natural, justly entitled to suppose Pliny's panegyric to be in the Taste of the Italians; and to pronounce with regard to the merit of Virgil and Lucan? It would take up some years to guess what the unaffected and sprightly abbe Cartaud means, in what he says of those poets; and though we were to spend ten years in this search, it would not be lost time, could we only imbibe some of that Taste of which he is the depositary. "Lucan," says he, "has something more astonishing than Virgil."

"The enthusiasm of Virgil seems to have been raised by the smoke of the incense, in the midst of the grimaces

grimaces of the temple; and that of Lucan seems to have been lighted up by a thunder-bolt." Such persons as love to guess at riddles, and search very industriously for such in the *Mercure Gallant*, may exercise themselves some time in enquiring what it was this author meant. With regard to myself, I will sincerely own that, after studying several days, I could not for the soul of me guess what was meant by the following words, "An enthusiasm, raised by the smoke of the incense, in the midst of the grimaces of the temple;" nor what that was, which "a thunder-bolt lighted up." As this, in all probability, is a new species of rhetoric, invented by the Directors of Taste, I imagined, as I had no other principles of eloquence but those which I borrowed from Quintilian, who is but a pitiful ancient, that it would not be decent in me to attempt to discover secrets which are reserved only for persons of Taste. If thou canst find out what I am not able to understand, I beseech thee, friend Isaac, to let me partake of thy discoveries. But alas! thou, as well as myself, art an ignorant foreigner, born in error, and deprived for ever of Taste. I therefore advise thee to forbear enquiring after things which it will be impossible for thee to understand. Remember only, as a consolation for being born with a genius, so very mean, and so far beneath that of the Directors of taste, that of Clarke and a Ditton, &c. are the companions of thy ill fortune, "These are writers," according to Cartaud, "who published nothing but conjectures, and do not inform their readers of any thing new. A Locke, a Newton, and a Marsham deserve indeed some encomiums, but then these ought to be given with some restrictions." There are even, among the French, some persons who have no more Taste than thee. Boileau, for instance, "was a person of a very melancholy turn of mind, subject to vapours, and who had usurped the dictatorship of Parnassus. One of the faults of his slander was, its being wanting in delicacy and truth. His compositions were correct, and harsh, and without fire."

Since

Since those, dear Isaac, who have taken possession of Taste, rank us with a Locke and a Boileau, let us no longer consider ourselves as unfortunate.

To be serious. I shall conclude my letter with bewailing sincerely the state into which it is very probable polite literature will soon fall, in France; at the same time that it seems to re-assume a new strength in England.

Enjoy thy health, friend Isaac, live contented and happy; and laugh, as I do, at this pretended good Taste.

## L E T T E R CXC VII.

The false taste the French have fallen into in the science of painting, ridiculed.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS

Paris. —

I Informed thee, dear Isaac, in my last letter, of the great influence which Taste\*, as it is called, has in France.

It has as much power over the polite arts. Painting is in as much danger as polite literature: And indeed the pictures of Poussin, le Brun and le Sueur, are not much sought after in this age; and such artists as attempt to paint in the style of those great genius's, and endeavour to exhibit, in their compositions, that majesty and harmony which are the soul of designing, are much less followed than those who paint such pictures, as formerly would not have been thought worthy of an antichamber. Wattaui was the Marivaux, and Lancret the la Motte in painting. These two painters not having genius enough to imitate the great models, and resolving not to be mere imitators, endeavoured to invent a new Taste. They

\* The author means, a love for trifles, and a bad taste. See the foregoing letter.

made



made choice of such a one as they imagined would please their nation which was already degenerated, and fond of nothing but trifles. They painted Scaramouches, Harlequins, Mezetins, and an hundred other such grotesque subjects. To the scandal of common sense, these bastard, these ridiculous productions were received and approved; and, what is worse, they were preferred to the compositions of the greatest genius's and those of the most excellent painters. This bad Taste, being thus encouraged by the great, afterwards prevailed among persons of a lower condition; and at this time, apartments are hung only with knickknacks, which are like so many fans rather than true pictures.

Most painters, in order to get off their works, have been forced to row with the stream; to quit in a great measure their first manner, and to give into the new one; and le Moine who, in another age, would perhaps have equalled le Sueur, commonly paints only such trifling sort of pieces. Vanlo and Caze, having more courage, are now the only persons who have resisted the general corruption; and would not dishonour their name, nor cast an odium on their reputation. They have not deviated in the least from good Taste; nor have introduced into their works, sacks and hoop-petticoats, instead of draperies in a true picturesque Taste; nor given us affected turns of the face, instead of heads whose air is graceful and noble. However, they paid dear for this resolution and love of glory, they gained much less money than the other painters; their merit being rewarded only with the applause of such as are true judges.

All foreigners who come to Paris are greatly surprized at the progress which bad Taste has made since the death of Lewis XIV. They can scarce think it possible that the French, after having been so justly fond of the compositions of le Brun, Poussin, Bourdon, Jouvenet and Boulogne, should, on a sudden, idolize so much those of Watteau, Lancret, Paters, and such puppet-shew painters: And they recover

recover from their astonishment only by reflecting that the French, and particularly the Parisians, have a strange fondness for knickknacks, and novelties however trifling.

It was not owing to a dearth of good painters that occasioned this new Taste to gain so much vogue; people not being forced to receive it, because there was no artist living who painted in the ancient Taste. There are now some excellent painters in Paris; Caze, the two Vanlos, and some others may be considered as great painters. It perhaps will be objected, that they do not come up to le Poussin and le Sueur. This I grant; but though a poet may not be as great a genius as Homer, he nevertheless may make a considerable figure in the commonwealth of learning. Giulio Romano, and the rest of Raphael's disciples did not possess as great talents as their master; nevertheless, the Italians do justice to their merit; and, because they did not equal the first designer in the universe, their countrymen did not give into a new Taste, infinitely more remote from perfection than the works of those painters.

An English gentleman whom I met with the other day at a picture-shop, took notice of a circumstance which must necessarily mortify the French not a little. After examining a great number of pictures, representing scenes of the Italian comedy, dances and country-wakes; "What is your opinion," says he, "of all these fantastical pieces? I am astonished," says he, "that they should be in so much vogue. This makes me apprehensive that painting will be absolutely lost in this country." "Your fears," replied I, "are extremely just. A great many people pretend that, twenty years hence, two of Raphael's pictures will be bartered for one of Watteau's fans."

How extraordinary soever such an exchange may be thought, yet several wagers have been laid, in England, on that occasion. Those who ground their assertions on the impossibility of such a circumstance, say, that it would be absurd to suppose, that men who are not utterly void of sense and reason, should ever

carry their folly to such a height. But those who affirm that the thing will certainly happen, produce an example which seems to assure them that they will not lose their wager. "If any man," say those people, "had asserted, fifty years ago, that the French would write books which should contain nothing but a parcel of words fantastically brought together; that they would maintain these works were perfect in their kind; and that the writings of Virgi, Tully, Ovid, Livy, Tacitus, &c. are trifling rhapsodies; such an opinion would have been thought a mad one: And yet this has happened. Raphael may consequently meet with Virgil's fate; and Watteau with that of Terrasson and Cartaud de la Villate. When a Frenchman," added this English gentleman, "endeavours to prove, that la Motte's works are superior to those of the ancients, methinks I meet Orlando Furioso, dragging his dead horse after him; bestowing the highest encomiums upon him; forcing me to barter a living one for it; and telling me, in confidence, that the horse in question has no other defect than his being dead. Methinks the admirer of la Motte tells me, in the fustian language of his hero, "My Odes, if you except about fifteen of them, have not the fire and harmony which is the characteristic of that kind of poem; but then, on the other hand, they have a periodical and soporific roundness, which is of great benefit to those who want sleep. My fables are written in a strain that was unknown till I give it vogue. The readers are therein taught to give the most fustian names to the most common things. A cabbage is no longer a cabbage, but a Kitchen-garden Phænomenon; and a dial is called a Solar Register. Are not such expressions infinitely preferable to all the coarse, antiquated beauties of Homer? May not you naturally suppose," continued the English gentleman, "that persons, who prefer such impertinencies to the real beauties of the Greeks and Romans, will one day set Lancret and Watteau above Raphael and Correggio? With regard to myself, methinks there is nothing extraordinary in

in the wager I spoke to you of; and I am so much surprized at the progress which bad Taste makes in France, that I am of opinion it may go to the utmost lengths."

It were to be wished, dear Isaac, that the reflections of this Englishman were known by the French, and that these might make a proper advantage of them. All who love the arts and sciences are concerned in their preservation. Some exalted genius, like that of Boileau, should endeavour to stop the progress of bad Taste, and oppose the evil effects which flow from it.

To return, worthy Isaac, to the painters. Those who excel in portraits, have not fallen from the glory of Titian and Vandyke: and as people have not yet taken it into their heads to be painted in the character of Harlequin or Columbine, the Taste of Watteau has not yet debauched Largilliere, Regaud, or de Troyes. The works of those great painters are superior to all, of that kind, produced at this time in Europe, and the most famous portrait-painters, whether of Italy, Germany, or Holland, and particularly England, are but artists of an indifferent genius, compared to those I just now mentioned to thee. It is not certain that France will enjoy this advantage long: For should some court lady, or some lordly fop cause themselves to be painted in the character of Mezetin or Marinette, the whole kingdom of France would be instantly enchanted with so noble an idea, and ridiculously metamorphos'd into an Italian theatre. Good Taste, therefore, with regard to portraits, stands upon a tottering foundation, and even begins to decay visibly. And indeed, how ridiculous is it for a Fontenelle or a Sir Richard Steele to be drawn in their caps! Those airs of familiarity are no way pleasing to the public, before whom it becomes every one to appear with the utmost decency. Formerly, both ladies and gentlemen had the frenzy to get themselves painted in the character of friars and nuns; so that nothing was every where seen but marquisses in cowls and monkish coats, and dutchesses



in veils and stomachers. Happily this mode did not last long; but perhaps a more ridiculous one may arise to-morrow.

Sculpture also still make a pretty good figure in this country. If there are no sculptors who equal Puget and Girardon, such as distinguish themselves in that art, endeavour, at least, to imitate those great masters; and their works, though not perfect, do yet boast very great beauties. In all probability, as sculpture is less dependent on mode than painting, it will not be so apt to fall into bad Taste. It is not, however, impossible for the statues of Pantaloons and Punchinellos to be received in all gardens; and more than one attempt has been made to throw out the Venus of Medicis for Columbine, and the Farneze Hercules for Scaramouch. This ridiculous folly, indeed, was not successful; however, a thing that was not well received at one time, may pass current at another. In this case, instead of the just proportions which the sculptors search after in their figures, they will endeavour only to give them the most extravagant wry faces. They will lose the idea of beautiful nature, and grotesque statues will be succeeded by monstrous figures, such as those formerly produced by gothic ignorance. When once the polite arts begin to decline, there seems to be a secret force which drags them along, and destroys them totally. Tully observed very justly, that as all the sciences bear a near relation to one another, the instant any of them is preyed upon by bad Taste, the rest soon feel the contagious effects of it. The same may be said of the polite arts.

Music, friend Isaac, is almost as much depraved as painting, in France. An attempt has been made to unite the Italian taste with that of the French; and by this means neither good Italian nor good French music were made. The new operas exhibited daily are vastly inferior to those of Lulli and Campra. The French, spite of their prevailing passion for novelty, are obliged to return to the ancient pieces. Phaeton, Theseus, Armida, &c. charm the public daily

daily, and all are delighted with them. Pyramus and Thisbe, the Elements and the Interlude of the Muses, are applauded by none but the lovers of novelty, who yet own that Lulli was superior to the musicians of the present age.

Instrumental music is much more perfect in Paris than vocal: But we ought not to consider it as an art which owes its progress to the French. These only imitated the Italians; and, in order to resemble their model the more, they have even abandoned the French taste. Le Clerc's sonatas differ vastly more from Lulli's taste and manner than from that of Corelli. If those musicians who have composed pieces for the violin, had imitated the composers of the modern operas; and blended in every part the French taste with the Italian, they would have produced very bad compositions; whereas, so long as they shall continue to follow the plan they have prescribed to themselves, they will come very near to the great masters, and perhaps equal them. There nevertheless is reason to fear, that they will be forced to change their Taste; as many persons begin to criticize their works, only because they are too much in the Italian taste, that is, because they are too good.

The French assert, that dancing is carried to the highest pitch of perfection among them. Foreigners, on the contrary, pretend that we are not to call what we see on the opera-stage at Paris, dancing, but capering. Some persons in this country are also of the same opinion, they saying that Prevot dances, that Camargo jumps, and Mariette makes wry faces. According to these people, there must be in all things in order to make them please persons of judgment, an air of decency and modesty. A woman who dances like a jumper or a vaulter, how surprizingly soever she may fly, goes out of her character, and causes more surprize than satisfaction. The dancing of Prevot gave pleasure; Camargo's flying raised astonishment; but this astonishment does not raise that soft attention in the mind, nor leave that secret

content in the heart, with which Prevot's graces inspired it.

Such, friend Isaac, is the taste of the polite arts in France. Thou mayest judge how greatly they are decayed within these twenty years, and the risk they run of decreasing perpetually. A circumstance which may console the lovers of them is, that though they decay in Paris they improve in some other countries. The arts and sciences resemble nature, the apparent losses of which give rise to new productions. The English, the Germans, &c. improve from the misfortunes of the French, as these improved by those of the Italians. When Petrarch, Boccace, Aristotle, Tasso, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio and Titian flourished, there was no one in Paris could be compared to those great artists. The Italians, some time after this, had but persons of an indifferent genius among them, whereas there then flourished in France, Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Moliere, Mallebranche, &c. At the time we are speaking of, the English had not yet seen their Sir Isaac Newton, their Locke, their Addison, their Pope, &c. They have had them; and the French now begin to have none but a Partaud, a Beauchamp, a Carfait and a Mouhi. This circulation of the arts and sciences ought to give the highest satisfaction to those who consider it as of all countries; and who attach themselves to what is useful, where ever they meet with it. A Frenchman who has this way of thinking, enjoys, in the midst of Paris, all the advantages found in countries where the sciences are carried to the highest degree of perfection: But few are able to make so judicious an use of their knowledge, so mighty is the force of prejudice.

Adieu, dear Isaac; live contented and happy, and be fond of such writings only as are written with the soundest judgment.

## L E T T E R CXCVIII.

An account of some disputes between the Molinists and Jansenists with regard to the abbe Paris; the artifices made use of by each, to lessen the other's authority and principles.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

Paris.——

**A**FTER a multitude of difficulties, I at last have ended, dear Isaac, all the affairs I had in Paris. To morrow I shall set out for Marseilles, where I expect to meet with a ship ready to sail for the imperial city. I therefore shall not be able to write to thee till I am arrived at Constantinople, where I hope to meet with Jacob Brito. By the last letters he wrote to me, I found that he was going to that city very soon.

After a troublesome but instructive voyage, we both shall enjoy, in our native country, the charming satisfaction of being among our relations, our friends and countrymen. We will endeavour to improve by the reflections we have made on the manners, the customs, and character of the several nations we have visited. These will be an ample field to us, and greatly contribute to our improvement in philosophy. We ourselves are now sensible of the great lengths to which mankind carry their prejudices; and have seen the sad effects of them in such nations as were the most learned and civilized.

Before I set out from Paris, one would have concluded that heaven thought fit to give me a final instruction, stronger than any I had yet met with; and which sets, in its full and clearest light, knavery, insincerity, superstition, enthusiasm, weakness, politics, fury and revenge. All these different passions, how opposite soever they may appear, are united on this occasion; and had I spent but one day in Paris, and been witness to an adventure which happened a few days since, this would have been reason  
enough



enough for me to moralize, all the remainder of my life, on the blindness of the common people, and the insincerity of those by whom they are led.

I have frequently spoke to thee of the Molinists the Jansenists, and the St. Paris of the latter. The present adventure relates to this pretended saint; and, in order to give thee a perfect idea of it, it may be proper to put thee in mind of the opposite steps taken upon his account, by these two turbulent parties.

The Jansenists, oppressed by the authority both ecclesiastical and civil, and endeavouring to raise their drooping faction by some conspicuous action, thought proper to have recourse to miracles, in order to keep up the weakness of their devotees, and win over new adherents. They were no ways successful, at first, with la Fosse, a woman troubled with a bloody-flux; but abbe Paris was of infinitely more advantage to them. He was one of their deacons, whose life and death were edifying; for which reason it was judged, that he would be of great use to forward their design. They therefore, by their private authority, placed him in heaven; and, by their own power, not only ascribed to him the gift of miracles, but even caused him to work great numbers. The common people, who are always stupid, and for that reason always cheated, immediately swallowed down this novelty, ran in crowds to this new saint, and were perpetually imploring his assistance.

The Molinists, fearing that such an abuse would be attended with fatal consequences, did not fail to oppose it with the utmost vigour. "If we permit, said they, our enemies thus to acquire a right of seating themselves in heaven, and of working miracles, we shall no longer have an opportunity of exclaiming against them as hereticks. It is therefore absolutely necessary, for the sake of Molinism, and especially for the interest of the Jesuits, that abbe Paris should be considered as a subject of Beelzebub,

and

and a fiend of hell, and, for this reason, we must assert roundly that all his virtues were so many grimaces, and mere juggler's tricks." This made them exclaim against him every where.

In the mean time the Jansenists asserted as strongly, on the other hand, that he every day wrought the most surprizing miracles; that he cured such diseases as were otherwise incurable; that he restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, &c. and that he wrought all these miracles, by causing the diseased persons to dance, jump and caper, in the same manner as musicians, in Italy, cure the bite of Tarantula.

The Molinists exclaimed strongly against this grotesque manner of restoring health. They firmly asserted, that it was impossible for these miracles to be real, or else, that they were the work of the devil; abbot Paris making men fools and frantic, before he restored them to their health; and this manner of working a cure, by jumping and howling very much resembled the agonies into which persons possessed of the devil are thrown.

However, the Jansenists, spite of these objections, pursued their first design. They always strongly asserted, that the Deity was at liberty to act as he thought proper; that it did not become weak mortals to endeavour to search into his views; and that St. Paris, knowing the great fondness the French have for shews and dancing, wrought such miracles as were apt to excite the curiosity of the people, and make an impression on their minds. "As the ancient miracles are now grown out of use, said they, they would not come into much vogue in this time; and it is very surprizing, as the Molinists imagine, that St. Ignatius made use of Virgil's verses, to cure persons possessed of the devil, they \* should think it strange that St. Paris should employ some of la Camargo's unnatural steps †, and some of Allard's ‡

\* See Letter LVIII.

† A female dancer in the

Opera. ‡ A famous vaulter and rope-dancer.

distortions

distortions. It must be confessed, either that the miracles wrought by the saints among the Molinists are brought about by the assistance of hell; or, it must be granted, that the beatified Jansenists have no occasion for this assistance, since the saints of both parties equally make use of extraordinary methods to restore health."

But these arguments made no impression on the Molinists, who still continue to inveigh strongly against abbot Paris; whilst the Jansenists on the other hand, are incessantly publishing new miracles; and the weak vulgar, who are made the dupes of any person who will attempt to impose upon them, have blindly followed the ideas which the directors of contortions inspired them with. Numberless multitudes of people were therefore crowding perpetually about abbot Paris's grave. Some howled in the strangest manner, whilst others danced and capered; and some contented themselves only with being the spectators of these extravagancies: and the unworthy principals of all this farce, after disturbing, in this manner, the minds of those unhappy victims of superstition, enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of seeing their impostures triumph, even before the eyes of their afflicted enemies.

However, they were not forgetful of their own interest. They flattered themselves that the wild extravagancies of those who made all these contortions would entirely destroy the credit of abbe Paris, in the minds of all persons who should make any use of their reason. Nevertheless, they were deceived in their expectations. Superstition and enthusiasm got, from the vulgar, among the great; and multitudes flocked to St. Paris's grave, in order to obtain the favour of heaven by his intercession. The holy Jansenist acted, with regard to them, much after the same manner as astrologers, who, amidst the great number of falsities vented by them, sometimes happen to hit upon truths. Thus among a vast number of diseased persons who found no relief, some were found who, either by time, by mere chance, and possibly

possibly by the force of their imaginations, were cured of their diseases.

This was sufficient to give a wonderful reputation to the patron of the caperers; and, from that instant, the most surprizing cures were ascribed to him, though he generally failed on those occasions. When his adherents were rallied on that account, and they were asked why abbot Paris did not cure all persons alike, they made the answer that it is given in all the religions where the belief of miracles is established, viz. "that those who did not receive any benefit were not endued with the faith requisite on such occasions. But whence comes it to pass, would they add, that multitudes have been so long disturbed without receiving any benefit? This also was imputed to their want of faith. By that means they were able to answer objections of every kind; and thereby the common people are made to swallow down the grossest absurdities.

Thus the principles of the Jansenists grew into greater credit by the favour of these miracles, which grieved the Molinists exceedingly, they were afraid that, should the reputation of abbot Paris increase, it would be impossible for them to cause to be received, as articles of faith, two opinions of which they are extremely tenacious: First, That the Roman pontiff reasons with judgment, even when he vents the greatest absurdities; and secondly, that his slipper is sacred; and ought to be humbly kissed, even by the greatest monarchs in the universe. For, ever since the pretended miracles of abbot Paris, his slippers were become the rivals of those of the pope of Rome. The Jansenists asserted, that the water in which they had been dipped, cured diseases of every kind; and the credit of the Parisian slipper began to ruin that of the supreme pontiff. Now in this contest of power between the two slippers, as the Jansenists had artfully got the start, and prejudiced the minds of the vulgar in their favour, their interest seemed to be that of heaven.

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The Molinists therefore, sensible of the error they had committed, resolved, at last, to employ force, to check the progress of the pretended miracles of the Jansenists. For this purpose they had recourse to the subaltern pontiffs, over whom they have a mighty ascendant. The latter represented to the court, that it was greatly prejudicial to the interest of religion, to permit, in the midst of Paris, and under the monarch's eye, fraud and imposture to triumph in this manner; and that it would be for the interest of the government, and even for that of the Christian religion, to punish with great severity a parcel of people who fomented a set of dangerous errors, which led directly to enthusiasm. The ministry, upon these remonstrances, ordered the gate of the church-yard in which abbot Paris's grave was deposited, to be walled up; by that means to prevent the populace from flocking to it.

This has been done some time: However, it did not lessen the number of the Enthusiasts; the tatters, the rags of the holy Jansenist, the water of the well belonging to the house he lived in, the bits of earth taken from his grave, and several other devout dainties of the same kind, having contributed but too much to keep up the spirit of folly and superstition. Nevertheless the extravagancies of the partizans of the pretended saint have been carried to such lengths, that several persons of a certain rank have been undeceived; and in proportion as the reputation of this abbot, ever since the shutting up of the church-yard where his grave lay, increased in credit with the vulgar, it diminished very much in the minds of people who were less prejudiced. Some books published by the Jansenists, contained the life of the blessed Paris, with the history and ridiculous miracles of the principal enthusiasts, have now completely opened the eyes of all persons who were not quite out of their senses; and the Jesuits did not fail to embrace this opportunity, to give their enemies a mortal wound, and to render them highly contemptible in the eyes of all persons of judgment.

At

At the same time, to make them odious to the court, they caused their emissaries to spread a report, that abbot Paris's body was to be taken away, either miraculously, or by his enemies. Upon this all the enthusiasts came forth, repeating their caperings and howlings; when the common people, roused by these enthusiastic expressions, rose up in a tumultuous manner, flocked in crouds to the grave in question, and made a strange tumult.

During this kind of sedition, which was owing to the knavery of the Jesuits more than to the enthusiasm of the Jansenists, the Molinists enjoyed inexpressible satisfaction. They were fully sensible how much the mad extravagancies of their enemies were advantageous to them, and how easy it would be totally to destroy them; and they are too able politicians not to reap all the advantages possible from them. The Jansenists themselves seem to second their views, nothing being better suited to that purpose than the vindictive miracle of the broken glass-windows, a mere school-boy's trick; and the silly step lately taken by a councillor of parliament, who represented not long since to the king his pretended truth demonstrated (*Verite Demonstree\**;) and who, as a reward for it, was thrown into the Bastile. We therefore may naturally suppose, that the enemies of abbot Paris will, in a short time, have all their wishes crowned, and that his devotees will be despised universally.

How wide a field is opened to us for reflection on the weakness of mankind, and the villainy of those who abuse it! What are men, dear Isaac? Creatures formed either to deceive or to be deceived. A very few only know into what errors their fellow-creatures are plunged. How many weak people, how many knaves and cheats are there in comparison of one true philosopher and wise man? In all countries there are persons who answer to the Molinists

\* The truth of the miracles wrought by the intercession of the abbot Paris demonstrated in opposition to the archbishop of Sens, by Mr. Carre de Menigeron.

and Janfenists in France. There are, in England, Protestants and Papists; in Spain, priests and friars; in Italy, ecclesiastics, and in Turkey, dervises. All the persons in question make use of religion for the compassing of their ends; and abuse too shamefully the sacred name of the Deity, to deceive the credulous vulgar, and give a sanction to things most repugnant to the law of nature. Why did not heaven (dear Isaac) indulge weak mortals some infallible method to discover impostors, spite of their numberless disguises, in the same manner as he has favoured the goldsmith with the load stone, to distinguish gold from copper, notwithstanding their resemblance with regard to colour?

Adieu, friend Isaac; may thy days be passed in tranquility. I shall not write to thee any more.

### L E T T E R CXCIX.

Some observations concerning the proper administration of justice, with respect to human laws.

AARON MONCECA TO JACOB BRITO.

Paris. —

**J**USTICE is exercised in France with pretty great prudence and wisdom. Foreigners, indeed think that it is administered a little too slowly; and that the formalities and procedures observed in it, give sometimes great uneasiness, to the parties, and retard the dispatch of their affairs. But this dilatoriness with which the French judges are reproached, would perhaps be extremely useful and necessary in many courts of justice, wherein dispatch in determining the most knotty points, afterwards gives rise to involuntary and pernicious errors. All men ought to be diffident with respect to their abilities. Magistrates ought to be still more afraid of committing errors, which are so much the more dangerous in their consequences, as they are covered with the specious veil of equity.

I cannot

I cannot but applaud a judge, who, slow in determining, examines an affair on all sides, and considers it in every light ; and fearing passions and prejudices, seeks, by mature deliberation, and by a form of proceeding that appears slow, but at the same time prudent and wise, to keep clear of those errors which commonly are inseparable from too much haste.

Could all contests be ended the instant they happen, I grant that it would be excellent to do this. But such is the weakness of mankind, that there are few contests but have two faces, and which presents them both to the eye : and when a person does not examine them attentively, he runs the hazard of falling into error, and of mistaking falshood for truth.

There nevertheless is an excess which a magistrate ought to shun. There is a wide difference between indolence and a prudent dilatoriness. When I am for having a judge take certain precautions before he determines, I do not mean that he should spin out a law-suit ten years, and suspend the definitive sentence either through avarice or idle formalities. A magistrate may not imitate the sudden decision of a Turkish Cadi ; and, yet, not copy after the avaricious and slow method of a Norman judge, who frequently, by the number of needless formalities observed by him, furnishes the litigants with weapons, and gives them an opportunity of perplexing and confounding the clearest matters. Judges sometimes do more harm than good to justice. They become the instruments which chicanery employs to elude truth. The order which they observe in their decisions is of greater prejudice than confusion and irregularity. It is not but they know evidently, that such a conduct is repugnant to reason and even equity. This they are persuaded of ; and they are taught from their infant years, that it frequently happens when a man follows exactly the rules prescribed by law, that the highest injustice is committed. Nevertheless, a superstitious fondness for ill-placed formalities, but which augments the income of their employments, serves as an excuse, and gives a sanction to their error.



That person must be endued with good sense and an extensive knowledge, who can find a just medium between too great dispatch, and a misplaced obedience to endless formalities. This is one of the principal qualities that forms the experienced and equitable magistrate. It is as much required, in him, as that of knowing how far the rigour of the law ought to extend; and on what occasions he may, and even ought, to swerve from its dictates. This last knowledge is extremely essential, and difficult to be acquired; for a magistrate ought not to deviate, but with the utmost precaution, from the laws and ordinances which serve as the basis to the general decision of affairs. They ought to be much more sacred than formalities; the latter not having near so much influence, with regard to the maintaining of order in society. When we have recourse simply to equity, and abandon the written laws, we run the risk of falling into error, without being able to know our mistakes. This equity, which we imagine we follow, and whose voice we fancy we hear in the inmost recesses of our hearts, frequently speaks in an obscure language, which our passions will not permit us to hear distinctly. Any person who looks into the Code or Digest, finds expressly there the will of the legislator; but we often see only, through the veil of prejudices, what rectitude seems to discover to us.

Besides, it is difficult for a judge not to be biased by the solicitations and prayers of persons for whom he has an affection; for which reason he ought, at least, to be as much upon his guard against them, as against his prejudices. Nothing can be of more dangerous tendency to a judge than love or friendship. If he is desirous of securing himself from those two passions, he must have a sure guide who may secure him from their attacks, and incessantly suggest to him the decree which he ought to pronounce. Now he always finds this decree, in an exact manner, in the body of written laws. Should he presume to follow any arbitrary ones, it is impossible but he must deviate from the right path. Too many things conspire to mislead him. It is incumbent on him to be

on his guard both against himself, and against other people.

The poor have no other solicitors and pleaders but the Code and the Digest, which always pronounce in their favour. Whenever these are not attended to, what becomes of those ill-fated people? How will it be possible for them not to fall a victim to the chicaneries of solicitors, and the captious arguments of lawyers; and yet, the first care of a judge ought to be that of protecting the weak from the mighty oppression. "The most essential duty," says an author of great reputation \*, "and the most serious occupation of a magistrate, is, to prevent, as much as lies in his power, the poor from being oppressed by the rich; and always to maintain an equilibrium between the weak and the strong. The view of most persons who purchase employments in courts of judicature, is not that they may have an opportunity of doing justice; but they only consider the authority with which they are entrusted; not remembering that they are not invested with it, in order that they may favour the great, and procure themselves friends; but, on the contrary, to oppose the injustice of the former, to protect those persons whose possessions they would unjustly seize; to secure, from their fury, the great number of innocent victims, part of whom they sacrifice to their ambition, and the rest to their vengeance. That man, who is desirous of becoming a judge, ought to weigh duly these several particulars; and in case he does not find that he has courage or probity enough to be a judge on the terms above-mentioned, and consequently not able to be, like the Roman Cassius, the terror of the guilty, how exalted soever; such an one ought never to put on the judicial robe. *Erudimini, qui judicatis terram, ne quando irascatur dominus, &c.*"

If we were to examine, with a philosophical eye, a great number of decisions, which appear just at first sight, we should discover, with astonishment, that a beautiful female pleader, a director, a friend or a

\* Amelot de la Houssaie, Remarq. Politiques & Historiques sur les annales de Tacite. Livr. III. Tom. V. pag. 192.

relation, have often more authority than Cujas, Bartolus, and du Moulin. Justice is commonly painted with a veil over her eyes. That goddess ought not therefore to distinguish between a Jew and a Heathen; or between a Jansenist and a Molinist. It would be happy were this the case; but, unfortunately, that Deity sometimes lifting up her veil, looks asquint, and seems to be a coquet playing at blindman's-buff.

Enjoy thy health, excellent Brito, and expect no more of my letters.

### LETTER CC.

An account of some natives of Provence who have excelled greatly in the polite arts.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

Grand Cairo. —

**I** Hope, dear Monceca, that my letter will find thee at Marseilles. If thou makest some stay in that city, thou mayest therein see several things worthy of the curiosity of travellers; and which thou hadst not time to consider, when thou camest into France.

Provence has given birth to many great men both in the arts and sciences. Some have had the good fortune to be known in every part of Europe: whilst others, though persons of the greatest merit, have been famous only among their fellow citizens.

A merchant of Provence, a person of genius and good sense who have lived ten years in Grand Cairo, and in whose company I am very frequently, has spoke to me often of many illustrious Literati, who are almost unknown in the republic of letters, because they never published any composition.

At the head of these Literati he placed the late Mr. de Mafauge, a friend of the late Peiresc, whose life is extant, written by Gassendi.

He likewise had an infinite esteem for the late Mr. Boyer d' Aiguilles, an able magistrate, who was deputed by the parliament of Provence to desire the removal of the first president; in which affair he succeeded

succeeded, spite of the obstacles thrown in his way. Tournefort has given the elogium of this learned gentleman, in the beginning of his travels; and justice has been done to his shining qualities, in the antiquities of the library of St. Genevieve. He had given an antique sepulchre to this library, and it has been engraved with the rest of the curiosities found there. This magistrate was skilled in all the polite arts and sciences, and possessed every ornament of the mind. He had formed a cabinet of very fine pictures, which were engraved under his directions, and published; they consisting of 100 large plates. He himself designed the frontispieces to those volumes.

This merchant of Provence spoke to me likewise of two persons who are still living. The first is a noble rhetorician, named Bougaret. He is writing the history of the illustrious men of the province in which he was born; and his work will give him a place among the most learned men of his country. The second (Chalamont de Visclede) has published some poems which have met with a very favourable reception from the public. This author is as much distinguished for his probity and integrity as for his genius. Affable, humble and modest, he possesses a great number of qualities which are almost unknown to men of letters. If thou makest some stay in Marseilles, I would advise thee to get acquainted with this valuable man; and he doubtless will introduce thee to all persons of merit.

Provence, dear Monceca, has given birth to many persons well skilled in the polite arts, who have made as conspicuous a figure as the two learned magistrates above-mentioned. Thou certainly hast heard that Puget, that famous sculptor, was a native of Marseilles; but thou dost not know that ever there was such a man as Verier. This Verier was a disciple of Puget, and carved as many fine pieces as his master, but then he never quitted the province he was born in. He did not make his appearance on the great theatre; he did not work for the court; so that his merit was known only to some of his countrymen.

Fauchier



Fauchier was as great a painter as Rigaud ; and perhaps it would not be an untruth to say that he was as noble a one as Vandike. I saw two portraits of his painting, which are worthy of being placed, with a peculiar distinction, in the choicest cabinets. This great painter never had any reputation ; at least, it was confined wholly to his native province, which he never quitted.

It is not always to merit, friend Monceca, that we ought to ascribe the fame a man has got in the world, chance often contributing greatly to it. How many illustrious genius's, learned men, fine painters, great sculptors, and excellent architects have been unknown, for want of meeting with some favourable opportunity of displaying their knowledge and talents to all Europe. Many a man will never be spoke of, merely because he was born in Sens or Castellane, who would have been daily honoured with the highest elogiums, had he been so happy as to have been a native of London, Paris, or Amsterdam, where he very probably might have made himself known.

I consider all men as so many players. Those who inhabit towns which lye at a great distance from court, are strolers. The public knows nothing of them ; nor would they ever hear of such persons, unless chance should happen to bring them upon the stage in Paris.

Thou doubtless hast observed, dear Monceca, in thy travels, that there are, in all countries, many very valuable persons ; and that a man of letters, though he may not be well known to the public, ought not to be less esteemed on that account. Endeavour therefore, if the contrary winds keep thee some days in Marseilles, to get acquainted with all persons of merit ; and the moment thou art arrived in Constantinople, let me hear from thee, and from Jacob Brito.

Adieu, dear Monceca ; may the God of our fathers shower down his choicest blessings upon thee.

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